

Nietzsche's Children: A Physiological Analysis of the Scholar's Task

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Graduate Program in Philosophy

**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

**Faculty of Arts, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario**

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ABSTRACT

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Throughout Nietzsche's writings we find discussions of the proper relationship of the scholar/scientist to the philosopher, with the scholar often being presented in a derogatory light. In this thesis, I examine Nietzsche's portrait of the scholar through the lens of his physiological or clinical perspective as articulated by Dr. Daniel R. Ahern in his monograph entitled *Nietzsche as Cultural Physician*. My aim in doing so is to grasp the affirmative, creative aspect of this seemingly destructive polemic against scholars. I begin with a detailed discussion of Nietzsche's portrait of the scholar in *Beyond Good and Evil*. This includes an explication of Ahern's position, followed by an application of the diagnostic perspective to Nietzsche's discussion of the objective type, the skeptic, and the critic. I then look at how the characteristics of all three types are present in the Nietzschean 'free spirit.' I also discuss the physiological basis of esotericism in Nietzsche's work, as well as Nietzsche's revaluation of the scholarly virtue known as *Redlichkeit* (or 'honesty'). I conclude with comments on the free spirit's relationship to the future.

Dedicated to Philip Glass, Igor Stravinsky, Hector Berlioz, J.S. Bach,
and the night staff at the Geneva Street Tim Horton's,
the combined productive efforts of whom made my own far more enjoyable.

And for Jim and Dan, for expecting me to live up to your standards.

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Key to Abbreviations:

Listed below are the abbreviations I use for all references to Nietzsche's works. All passages from Nietzsche are cited by section number.

A	<i>The Anti-Christ</i>
BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
D	<i>Daybreak</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
HH	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
SE	<i>Schopenhauer as Educator</i>
TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
TL	<i>On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense</i>
UD	<i>On The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life</i>
WP	<i>The Will to Power</i>
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Introduction: Nietzsche on Scholars

It should come as no surprise to a student of Nietzsche that Nietzsche is hard on scholars. Throughout his career his portrayal of this type is singularly unflattering, from his criticism in “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” of “idler[s] in the garden of knowledge” who study history “so as to turn comfortably away from life and action” (Foreword) to his depiction of the scholar in *Beyond Good and Evil* as being akin to an “old maid” who is “full of petty envy” and subject to “the instinct of mediocrity” (206). In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the protagonist states that he has “moved from the house of scholars and... even banged the door behind [him]” (2:16), while in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche indulges in a full-fledged diatribe against the “cowardly contemplativeness... [and] lascivious historical eunuchism” of the “‘objective’ armchair scholar” (3:26). Even when paying a compliment his observations seem designed, at best, to marginalize the task of the scholar; in BGE, Nietzsche describes “the *ideal* scholar” as amounting to no more than “an instrument, something of a slave, if certainly the sublimest kind of slave... in himself he is nothing – *presque rien!*” (207).

Assuming that the scholar has not, by this point, slammed the door on Nietzsche in disgust, he might ask what Nietzsche was up to with this particular strain of polemic. Given the wider context of Nietzsche’s overall task – namely, “*the revaluation of all values*” (EH, 2:9) – is it not reasonable to assume that he is engaged, here, in the revaluation of the scholar? His stated purpose, in the chapter of BGE entitled “We Scholars,” is “to combat a harmful and improper displacement of the order of rank between science and philosophy” (204); as Nietzsche sees it, the scholarly type, “with great high spirits and a plentiful lack of understanding” (*ibid.*), has conflated itself with the philosopher and must be put in its place. This displacement of the order of rank, for Nietzsche, hinges in part on “the poverty of the most recent philosophy itself, which

has been most thoroughly prejudicial to respect for philosophy and has opened the gates to the instinct of the plebeian” (BGE, 204). In other words, the democratization of the sciences has leveled the playing field to the point where the term ‘philosopher’ designates nothing more or less than ‘scholar,’ and anyone who writes a paper in the discipline of philosophy can call himself a philosopher with a clear conscience. It is Nietzsche’s task, in part, to correct the impression that just anyone can be a philosopher by restoring to philosophy the respect it is due as the highest calling attainable by the human animal. If this is to succeed, both scholars and potential philosophers (the ‘philosophers of the future’ to whom BGE is addressed) must understand their specific tasks relative to one another – the philosopher through Nietzsche’s example, and the scholar through his legislation. It is not enough, for Nietzsche, that the potential philosopher continue to grope and stumble his way towards becoming what he is; the task of genuine philosophy must be made self-conscious for the first time, perhaps, since Plato, and for the philosopher to succeed he will require the services of scholars who understand their place in the natural order.

For this reason, despite the derogatory nature of Nietzsche’s commentary on the scholarly type, I will argue that this aspect of his thought is not merely, or even primarily, polemical. Rather, I am of the opinion that there is a more subtle political agenda operating under the surface here, and that Nietzsche is no more ‘anti-scholar’ than he is an anti-Semitic misogynist. This is not to suggest that his critique does not carry weight, and that we must perform a set of mental gymnastics attempting to read an insult as an accolade; rather, we must keep in mind the fact that Nietzsche does not engage in casual destruction. If he has found sufficient reason to criticize the scholarly type, the odds are that the criticism is deserved, and as he does not destroy without creating, the implication is that there is, in fact, something of great value to be forged out

of the raw material of the scholar as it has existed hitherto. In short, I am of the opinion that, under the right conditions, the scholar can attain an extremely high rank in the Nietzschean universe, and have chosen it as my task to discover what those conditions are. Given the emphasis Nietzsche placed on physiology – that is, on the role of the instincts in all human evaluation – my primary focus in analysing Nietzsche's portrait of the scholar will be on drawing out the physiological dynamics implicit in this portrait. In doing so, I am less concerned with *what* Nietzsche objected to than with *why* certain characteristics are problematic in light of what they reveal about their underlying physiology, and with how this objection informs our understanding of the task of a scholar of rank. In other words, my aim is not to focus on what Nietzsche believed to be worthy of destruction, but on the ideal that he wished to set up in its place.

Sections one through three consist of a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's portrait of the scholar. Section one begins with a brief discussion of the distinction between the philosopher and the scholar, in order to draw a correlation between the philosopher and the high-ranking scholar which respects the scholar's limitations while establishing the criteria for a scholarly order of rank. I then move on to an exegesis of Daniel Ahern's discussion of the physiological dynamics of will to power, in order to justify my assertion that the criterion of scholarly rank lies in comprehensiveness of perspective. In section two, I look at Nietzsche's discussion of three manifestations of the scholarly type – namely, the objective spirit, the skeptic, and the critic – through the lens of the physiology established in section one, in order to demonstrate how an understanding of the respective tasks of these three types is informed by an understanding of the physiology of will to power. I then turn, in section three, to Nietzsche's description of the free spirit in order to demonstrate the way in which the free spirit fulfills the criterion of the high-

ranking scholar by combining the physiological characteristics of the three types previously discussed.

My fourth section addresses the question of Nietzsche's esoteric strategy as presented in Daniel Conway's essay "*Parastrategesis*, Or: Rhetoric for Decadents" in order to demonstrate how a consideration of Nietzsche's physiological perspective can resolve certain problems that can arise when interpreting his work. Here, I argue that Conway's failure to consider the physiological basis of Nietzsche's understanding of esotericism leads him to deny the possibility of an esoteric reading of Nietzsche's work. In light of Nietzsche's reliance on physiology, esotericism must be understood as an appeal to experience rather than as a purely rhetorical strategy, and as such is grounded in a particular instinctive orientation present within a certain type of reader.

My fifth and final section deals with the virtue of *Redlichkeit*, which is often (although problematically) translated as 'honesty.' In this section, I engage with Alan White's essay "The Youngest Virtue" which, in reconstructing the genealogy of *Redlichkeit* as discussed by Nietzsche in GS, betrays inadequate sensitivity to the dynamics of will to power as operative in the history of Western philosophy. In correcting for White's missteps, which hinge on a minor terminological error, I attempt to draw out the implications of this important scholarly virtue in a manner which goes beyond White's own conclusions.

§1: Of Scholars and Philosophers: A Physiological Order of Rank

In SE, Nietzsche distinguishes between two paths which lie open to a man with scholarly inclinations. On the first path, "he will be welcome to his own age, it will not fail to offer him laurels and rewards, [and] powerful parties will bear him along" (6). The second path, however,

“will offer him companions more seldom, it will be more difficult, more tortuous, steeper” (*ibid.*); those on this path see it as their task

to help prepare within themselves and around them for the birth of the genius and the ripening of his work. Not a few, including some from the ranks of the second- and third-rate talents, are destined for the task of rendering this assistance and only in subjection to such a destiny do they come to feel they have a duty and that their lives possess significance and a goal. (*ibid.*)

While the young Nietzsche displays a clear preference for the second path (it being the path upon which he himself set out), this should not suggest that those on the first path, by virtue of having chosen an easier, more conventional, and presumably more lucrative route, are without value in the eyes of the philosopher. As demonstrated by the use Nietzsche makes of Dr. Paul Reé and his ilk in GM (*Pref.* 4, 1:1-3), these scholars, while they do not consciously serve the philosopher, are nonetheless valuable in that they give him access to perspectives that are at odds with his own. As Nietzsche remarks in the Preface to BGE, the philosopher requires not only “the arrow [and] the task” but also “the *target*”; these scholars serve in the sense that they give the philosopher an opportunity to study his target at close range – ‘know your enemy’ being an indispensable rule of engagement.

What this passage demonstrates is that, while all scholars are useful to the philosopher to some extent, there is a clear order of rank among scholars in the sense that some are more valuable to the philosopher’s project than are others. Given the fact that, for Nietzsche, the relative value of any given talent or virtue depends on the individual who displays it, Nietzsche’s outline of the characteristics of the typical scholar cannot refer to a single, static type, the scholar ‘in-itself.’ While Nietzsche often gives the impression of putting forward blanket statements on the nature of the scholar as such, I will argue that each of the characteristics he outlines can be either an asset or a shortcoming depending on the rank of the scholar in question. The

implication is that some scholars will be capable of making themselves more valuable to the philosopher, and it is for this reason that the task of the scholar must be made self-conscious. Just as there is a certain, very limited amount of movement possible between the ranks of scholars and philosophers (in the sense that a man destined to achieve the rank of philosopher must pass through the ranks of the scholar on his upward journey¹), I will argue that there is a similar potential for upward movement through the ranks of scholars themselves. Again, no man can raise himself above his highest potential, and thus the rank that any scholar is capable of achieving will depend on the physiological economics of the organism – the quantum of force he has at his disposal.

The question then becomes: what is the criterion by which the rank of a scholar can be assessed? The framework provided by Nietzsche's observations on the scholarly type provide a strong indication of what a scholar of rank is not, and these observations are often accompanied by a contrast between the scholar and the philosopher (or genius). I will argue that the gradation of rank between higher- and lower-order scholars mirrors, in some respects, the distinction between the philosopher proper and his scholarly servants; in other words, while even the highest-ranking scholar cannot be considered a philosopher in the precise sense, his task will more closely resemble that of the philosopher than that of the lower-order scholars. For this reason, I will briefly examine the philosopher/scholar distinction as presented in Nietzsche's work, in order to draw a correlation between the philosopher and the high-ranking scholar which respects the scholar's limitations while providing the criteria for a scholarly order of rank.

¹ Cf. BGE, where Nietzsche writes: "It may be required for the education of the philosopher that he himself has also once stood on all those steps on which his servants, the scientific labourers of philosophy, remain standing – *have to remain standing*" (211).

The clearest formulation of the distinction between the philosopher and the scholar is that the philosopher legislates values, and the scholar works within the context of the values thus legislated. As Nietzsche writes, the philosopher's task "demands that he *create values*" (BGE, 211), whereas

philosophical labourers... have to take some great fact of evaluation – that is to say, former *assessments* of value, creations of value which have become dominant and are for a while called 'truths' – and identify them and reduce them to formulas, whether in the realm of *logic* or of *politics* (morals) or of *art*. (*ibid.*)

These respective tasks can also be framed in terms of the distinction between explanation and interpretation. This relationship, like the relationship between the philosopher and the scholar, is one of commanding and obeying.² As Laurence Lampert points out, explanation is the prerogative of the philosopher: it is the philosopher's task "to furnish a reasonable explanation of the world, one that grounds the interpretations of physics and biology" (*Task*, 46). A Nietzsche scholar, then, interprets the world on the grounds of Nietzsche's "unified, nonteleological, [and] explanatory account of the whole of nature" which decrees that "will to power is the animating impulse of all beings" (Lampert, *Task*, 47), just as scholars from Aristotle and Augustine to Descartes and Kant interpreted the world on the grounds of transcendent, eternal values as per Plato's legislation. It is in this sense that the philosopher "determine[s] the Wherefore and Whither of mankind" (BGE, 211).

In SE, Nietzsche presents this distinction in terms of a differing relationship to the quest for truth. He begins by pointing out that "*certain* 'truths'" are very valuable to the scholar, but his motivation has little to do with the search for truth 'as such'; as he writes, the scholar is

² The distinction between activity and reactivity can also be applied here; in a world the fundamental nature of which is will to power, acting, commanding, and explaining are simply different terms for the same basic phenomenon, and likewise reacting, obeying, and interpreting.

driven “by his subjection to certain ruling persons, castes, opinions, churches, governments: he feels it is to his advantage to bring ‘truth’ over to their side” (6). By contrast with Schopenhauer, the image of the heroically self-sufficient philosopher who “set[s] up before him a picture of life as a whole, in order to interpret it as a whole” (SE, 3), the majority of scholars are “confined to a wretched little corner” by their “sharpsightedness for things close up, combined with great myopia for distant things and for what is universal” (6). It is for this reason that the typical scholar is incapable of having anything to do with the task of philosophy proper – philosophy understood in the Nietzschean sense of “achiev[ing] *the most comprehensive perspective* out of which new values are created” (Lampert, *Task* 13, emphasis added).

I will argue that it is the relative comprehensiveness of perspective which provides the criterion for determining the rank of a scholar. Retaining the key distinction between the creator versus the interpreter of values, if the philosopher is the individual with the most comprehensive perspective on life, the highest-ranking scholar will be the individual with the most comprehensive perspective on the philosopher. Such a scholar continues to work within the values legislated by the philosopher, and thus remains among the ranks of philosophical labourers, but rather than being confined to a particular corner of the philosopher’s work he has at his disposal the entirety of the image of life as legislated by the philosopher. The scholarly gradation of rank from lower to higher will thus be determined by how much of this ‘picture of life’ each scholar can assimilate; to draw on the analogy of the “spirit as stomach,”³ the scholar’s rank will depend on the digestive power of his spirit – on how much of the philosopher he can swallow without succumbing to indigestion.

³ In BGE, Nietzsche speaks of the spirit’s “power to appropriate, its ‘digestive power’” and says that “‘the spirit’ is more like a stomach than anything else” (230).

As I mentioned above, for Nietzsche, the rank that any scholar can attain depends on the physiological economics of the organism – on the quantum of force it has at its disposal. In identifying breadth of perspective as a criterion of rank, then, what I am saying is that this criterion indicates, in some manner, how much strength a scholar has to draw on; it is a symptom which can help to ascertain the relative strength or weakness of the organism in question. It is not, however, an explanation: simply saying that a greater level of strength equals a more comprehensive perspective does not clarify *why* this is so, but remains at the level of symptomatology. What is needed, then, is an account of the physiological dynamics of strength and weakness, one which illuminates the way in which the physiology of the organism determines the relative breadth or narrowness of its perspective. Such an account is to be found in Daniel R. Ahern's monograph entitled *Nietzsche as Cultural Physician*, which constitutes an in-depth inquiry into Nietzsche's clinical or diagnostic perspective. In what follows, I will outline Ahern's discussion of Nietzsche's criteria for diagnosing health and sickness, in order to provide a physiological justification for my criterion of scholarly rank. I will then turn, in section two, to the individual characteristics of the scholar as presented by Nietzsche, and the way in which each point can be seen as either an asset or a shortcoming depending on how it functions within the overall context of the scholar's physiological economy.

Before diving into Ahern's analysis, it is necessary to explicate what is meant by physiological analysis as Nietzsche understands it. Physiology refers to Nietzsche's method of tracing a set of symptoms back to an underlying cause; a particular constellation of symptoms (which show themselves as values, habits, beliefs, etc.) reveals the hierarchy of an organism's instincts, which hierarchy as a whole can be oriented either towards the enhancement of overall force (ascending life) or the preservation of force (life in decline). The instincts are variously

referred to throughout Nietzsche's corpus as wills, forces, drives, desires, or passions; given Nietzsche's "requirement of method, which has essentially to be economy of principles" (BGE, 13), each of these terms necessarily designates the fundamental explanatory principle of will to power and so must be used equivocally.⁴ As Nietzsche writes, if his experiment is successful in

explaining our entire instinctual life as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of will – as will to power, as is *my* theory – ; granted that one could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and could also find in it the solution to the problem of procreation and nourishment... one would have acquired the right to define *all* efficient force as: *will to power*. (*ibid.*)

While Nietzsche does draw a distinction between the organic and the inorganic realms, this distinction is made on the basis of the relative complexity of the forces comprising organic life as opposed to those governing the inorganic; the same fundamental force is operative in both cases.⁵ In this sense, Nietzsche's emphasis on physiology is part of his project of "translat[ing] man back into nature" (BGE, 230); because the human animal is just one physical structure among others, the explanatory principle of will to power must, if Nietzsche's experiment is to be successful, account for the basic dynamics of everything from stars and planets to plants and animals. In terms of diagnosing health and sickness in the organic world, then, Nietzsche's criteria must apply across the board, to organic life in all its forms; in other words, the power

⁴ As Lampert writes, "the world can never be seen from within. There is no such thing as knowledge of the 'intelligible character' of the world. Nevertheless, what we can, in a sense, know from within, our desires and passions, what is intelligible in the processes most accessible to us, permits us in good scientific conscience to draw a hypothetical conclusion about the world as a whole. We can posit an intelligible character to the whole as continuous in kind with that particle of the whole especially accessible to us.... Positing this intelligible character to the world provides the only possible foundation for the sciences; naming it will to power names its fundamental quality of expansive force, which articulates itself into all phenomena" (*Task*, 88).

⁵ Ahern writes that "what binds the organic and the inorganic together *as* will to power is 'the repelling force exercised by every atom of force' (WP, 642). The river and the mountain... are power quanta repelling each other insofar as the river cannot wash away the mountain and the mountain cannot bury the river. They exist as what they 'are' only through mutual resistance and opposition" (14).

dynamics that make an evergreen strong or weak cannot be essentially different from those which make a human strong or weak.

As Ahern writes, “every organism reveals becoming, that spontaneous and blind ignition to growth, transition, and transformation” (13). Essential to this process is the creation of an order of rank among organisms of varying strength. A mature evergreen, for example, asserts its priority – its rank – over a nearby seedling insofar as it is strong enough to draw nutrients from the sun and soil at the expense of the youngling; in this way, the evergreen thrives while the seedling withers in its shade, too weak to challenge it for a share of the sun. Ahern tells us that, like the inorganic realm,

the organic realm is also a plethora of power quanta, but here a capacity for *deception* reveals a “rising order of rank of creatures. It seems to be lacking in the inorganic world... cunning begins in the organic world; plants are already masters of it” (WP, 544). It seems odd to think of plants as masters of deception. But what Nietzsche saw in them was an uncanny ability to subjugate and exploit organic and inorganic compounds in order to enhance themselves. (14)

Other means whereby plants and non-human animals display this capacity for deception is noted by Alistair Moles, who cites such phenomena as “fly-trapping plants... [which] attract... insects that assist in the reproductive process... the development of edible fruits... [and] camouflage, lying in wait, playing dead” (136). In this light, deception and the capacity to deceive must be understood as a property of organic life as such, and thus as a purely amoral phenomenon.

It is important to note at this point that the subjugation of the seedling and the exploitation of vital nutrients on the part of the evergreen do not aim merely at survival, but at growth in power. As Ahern writes,

the *archē* of life is revealed in the mutual resistance of all organic entities, in the contest within which the victor wins, not the prize of bare survival, but enhanced strength. It is important to bear in mind that within this “contest” an organism as will to power may destroy itself in the attempt “to become *more*” (WP, 688).

Hence, Nietzsche insists that when it comes to living things, we cannot “take hunger as the *primum mobile*, any more than self-preservation” (WP, 652). Self-preservation is only a consequence of “the original will to become stronger” (WP, 702). (15)

This becomes clear if one imagines a situation in which two trees of roughly equal size spread their root systems to the point of encroaching on one another’s territory: if pure preservation was their goal, these trees would expand their root systems only to the point where they entered into tension with one another, each leaving the other room to maintain its size without endangering either. What actually happens, however, is that they each begin to contest the other’s right to expand, until the stronger of the two – the one able to thrust its roots deepest and commandeer the most nutrients – will begin to choke off the other’s source of nourishment. This results in the decline of the weaker, which, when it eventually dies and begins to decay, serves to provide yet more nutrients to the victor, swelling its strength even further. This is the physiological basis for Nietzsche’s claim that “life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of the strange and weaker, suppression, severity, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and, at the least and mildest, exploitation” (BGE, 259).

While there is much more that could be said about the power dynamics of the organic world, for the purposes of our inquiry this brief sketch will suffice. What remains to be shown is how the human animal partakes in the mutual struggle and resistance that comprises the organic world as a whole. As we will see, this *agon* is reflected in what Zarathustra calls “the envy and mistrust and calumny” (1:5) of the instincts. Nietzsche tells us that the instincts are a “tremendous quantum of power” (WP, 704) which are “contained in a powerful unity” (BGE, 36), namely, the human body. In a limited sense, an instinct may be compared with the evergreen of my previous example: it asserts its right to growth by seeking out, challenging, and

overwhelming (or being overwhelmed by) that which opposes it, in an attempt to add the strength of the vanquished element to its own power base.⁶ This is a limited example because, as Nietzsche points out, to speak of ‘individuals’ in any more than a provisional sense is already a falsification of the facts:

“What does a plant strive after?” – but here we have already invented a false unity which does not exist: the fact of a millionfold growth with individual and semi-individual initiatives is concealed and denied if we begin by positing a crude unity “plant.” (WP, 704)

Likewise, it is misleading to speak about the nature of ‘an’ instinct, as a drive only becomes what it ‘is’ in and through the particular point of tension it maintains within the fluctuating order of rank of a multiplicity of instincts; it does not first exist as a self-identical singularity which later enters into conflict with other self-identical and singular instincts. For Nietzsche, all identity, whether we are speaking of an instinct, an individual, or a culture (etc.), is a precarious unity which contains a multiplicity of forces in the same way that a single body contains a multiplicity of organs. For this reason, “all unity is unity only as organization and co-operation – just as a human community is a unity – as opposed to an atomistic anarchy... that *signifies* a unity but is not a unity” (WP, 561). Thus when Ahern writes that “each [drive] is a center of force seeking domination over the others... a self-centered, self-affirming perspective, through which the world is ‘seen, felt, interpreted as thus and thus’ (WP, 678)” (17-8), we must keep in mind that ‘each

⁶ In his monograph entitled *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche’s Genealogy*, Christopher Janaway states that the interpretation of will to power in terms of a “global metaphysical volitionism” is “an appalling embarrassment” (153). The problem here, it seems, is that in interpreting “the essence of the world *in itself* [as] will to power, and every phenomenon [as] a species of *wanting* or *desiring* power” (*ibid.*), this view “leaves Nietzsche with no alternative to a mental vitalism, reading mind into all things” (Richardson, *Nietzsche’s New Darwinism* 64, in Janaway, 161). Janaway suggests that Nietzsche’s use of “intentionalistic, anthropomorphic language” (160) in his descriptions of will to power ought not to be read as a literal attempt to read “mindedness” into nature, but that “at the very least, Nietzsche finds something mindlike in natural processes, some kind of interpretation and dominance that it makes sense to treat as analogous to genuine striving” (161).

center' is essentially fluid, subject to continual revaluation through combination with or disjunction from others as the context within which 'it' functions transfigures itself. While we must, in our analysis, represent '*the* drive to self-preservation,' or '*the* sex drive' (etc.), the meaning of each drive is ultimately and uniquely dependent on the overall constitution of the individual organism – there exist no identical cases. Hunger, for example, takes on a far different meaning for a starving animal than it does for one who is recovering from an overindulgent meal: for the former, hunger is an aching void which interprets the world as a hostile environment that stands between itself and satisfaction, while for the latter, satisfied hunger interprets the world as a fine place in which to take a long nap.

Here we see that “the primary role of the drives in all interpretation constitutes the physiological dynamics of Nietzsche’s famous ‘perspectivism’” (Ahern, 17). For Nietzsche, ‘perspective’ is not merely a matter of individual humans possessing differing opinions which are more or less valid in a relativistic sense, but refers to the “particular valuation, mode of action, and mode of resistance” (WP, 567) adopted by ‘individual’ instincts; the cumulative order (or disorder) of the instincts determines the overall (that is, conscious) perspective of the organism. The connection between the perspective of an instinct and an organism’s conscious values lies in the generation of “affects.” As Ahern writes:

When one drive subdues another, the strength of the weaker is harnessed by the stronger. This produces, says Nietzsche, an “affect,” or sensation of power, that is felt throughout the body and derived “from the one will to power” (WP, 786). The affects are a synthetic unity of sensations permeating the entire organism, including consciousness. These sensations of the power struggle among the drives are reflected in and constitute all conscious activity.... In short, among the drives an order of rank is established wherein they “maintain their existence and assert their rights against each other.” This “contract” constitutes the overall perspective of the chain of command among the instincts. And it is this “contract,” this overall affect, that, after the “last scenes of reconciliation... rise[s] to

consciousness”.... Consciousness passively reflects and is itself “nothing but a *certain behaviour of the instincts toward one another*” (GS, 333). (17-8)

It is for this reason that, for Nietzsche, conscious thought is a derivative phenomenon, a *result* of the interaction of the drives and not an active agent which legislates this interaction through rational deliberation; as Zarathustra puts it, “the creative body created the spirit [*Geist*/intellect] as a hand for its will” (1:4).

In light of our investigation thus far, the phenomenon of health is not difficult to grasp. Insofar as the aim of life as will to power is not preservation but enhancement, the drives of the healthy organism must display an order of rank which functions to increase the strength of the whole. Ahern tells us that

there is no doubt that our instincts are our greatest sources of strength... but possession of powerful drives alone is not enough. Within the genuinely healthy type, one drive must establish its dominance and exploit the combined power of all the others in the *service of one goal*. The goal is, of course, the perspective of this overarching drive. (19)

This exploitation of the weak by the strong not only remains consistent with the law of life as will to power, it produces a drive-context characterized by *integrity* (in the sense of ‘wholeness,’ ‘soundness,’ or ‘reliability’). A drive-context characterized by integrity, then, means one in which the drives have become ‘integrated’ with one another through the dominance of the most powerful drive or drives; in this way, Ahern tells us, the dominant drive “harmonizes the other instincts so as to allow them *all* gratification within *its* predominant perspective” (20), ensuring that even the weakest drives will increase in strength by submitting to a common orientation.

The phenomenon of weakness, by contrast, must be understood in terms of dis-integration and reactivity. As Ahern writes, ‘weakness’ in a physiological sense means that

no one drive can harness the power of the others.... Without a dominant instinct that gives rein to the other drives within the bounds of its perspective, the weak

individual will attempt to satisfy the demands of all the drives. He or she is physiologically incapable of not *reacting* to them. There is no choice here, moral or otherwise; weakness is a lack of discipline based on physiological dynamics. (20)

In a state of weakness, “the power of the drives, so lacking in ‘precision and clarity’ (WP, 46), is squandered in all directions” (Ahern, 21). Exhaustion is the cumulative affect associated with this state. As Ahern writes, “the condition is one of psychological fragmentation as the physiological affect of disparate, unharnessed instincts.... This type of person does not act so much as ‘merely react to stimuli from outside’ (WP, 71)” (21). An individual locked within this cycle of reactivity is “in a state of emergency” (Ahern, 22), and but one step away from decadence and, eventually, sickness proper.

The importance of the physiological dynamics of decadence to Nietzsche’s project cannot be overemphasized, as they provide the context within which the vast majority of his comments concerning Western culture operate. In a state of weakness, the strength of the body is ebbing away as the exhausted individual pursues multiple and often contradictory goals. As Ahern writes:

Constantly provoked by whatever both attracts and repels him... this type always feels “as if his self-control were endangered” (GS, 305). Within this hyperdefensive posture the instinct of self-preservation, one of our oldest and strongest drives, is stimulated. It makes its power play in reaction to the individual’s general state of siege, and precisely this reaction marks the beginning of physiological decadence. (22)

It seems odd to think of the very drive which allows us to survive becoming a source of further disintegration. It is the *perspective* unique to self-preservation, however, which provides the essential condition for decadence. This perspective, Ahern tells us, is geared towards the imposition of stability:

Through the instinct of preservation’s fable of stability, we “impose upon becoming as much regularity and form as our practical needs require” (WP, 595).

This fiction allows for a sense of equilibrium within the wilderness of becoming; it negates becoming and allows the human being to take possession of the world. Before we can dance, we have to establish and make the floor our own. (43)

In this light, the perspective imposed by the instinct of self-preservation allows for the manipulability of the human animal's world: we are able to build a house, for example, only insofar as we can interpret our tools as 'stable' enough to be picked up and put to use, and the house as sufficiently 'enduring' to shelter us from the elements. This interpretation of stability provides resistance to the stronger, creative drives, and thus stimulates them to combat with the drive to preservation. If these drives are victorious, they will add the strength of the drive to preservation to their own power base, resulting in greater units of power; in this way, "self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*" (BGE, 13) of the organism's activity, and not its goal. As Ahern writes, "without the initial *fiction* of stability... the life-enhancing 'aesthetics' of more-powerful drive-perspectives would have... nothing to attack and destabilize" (43); they would have nothing to stand in the way of their own interpretations, and thus nothing to overcome in order to increase their strength.

I would like, here, to reiterate my point above that the meaning of each drive is ultimately and uniquely dependent on the overall constitution of the individual organism. In the healthy individual, self-preservation is aligned with the other drives in a manner conducive to growth in power both for itself and for the organism overall; it, like the context within which it functions, is characterized by integrity. Similarly, as Ahern writes, "in the context of weakness and exhaustion this drive displays the overall fatigue of the organism as a whole" (22), and in this impoverished state it is not, in fact, strong enough to harness the other drives and re-establish integrity. However, "as an instinct, it is still will to power and therefore attracted to precisely the *resistance* to *its* perspective" (Ahern, 22) insofar as it seeks out that which is foreign to it in

order to impose its own perspective and render it familiar. The way in which self-preservation leads to decadence involves an imposition of stability which is *not* conducive to growth in strength. Ahern writes that

the irritated and reactionary traits of the weak person also characterize the instinct of preservation's mode of combat with the other drives. Stimulated by the chaos within and without, this ancient drive emerges within a state of physiological emergency; the strength of the organism as a whole is being drained by the constant combat of the other drives. This ebbing of vitality is manifest also within the drive of preservation in two respects. First, its impulse is not toward future growth via the other drives but toward an immediate stop to the hemorrhage of the body's strength. Second, it strives for stability through negating the most powerful drives. The urge toward negation of these drives as dangerous threats reveals preservation's enervated condition *and* the formula for decadence because the desire to nullify the most powerful drives in order to achieve stability is simultaneously the desire to cancel precisely the source of the body's greatest strength. (23-4)

The resulting 'civil war' of the instincts begins with the coercion and exploitation of the body's weakest instincts by self-preservation which, thus armed, enters into combat with the independent, warlike drives in order to impose on them its interpretation of stability. These, predictably, "dissipate themselves to the point where preservation easily overrides and levels off their affects" (Ahern, 24). This further devitalizes the organism insofar as "the instinct of preservation is siphoning the power of already weak drives to repress the body's most potent sources of growth" (Ahern, 25). In Nietzsche's words, "we stand before a problem of economics" (WP, 864) which leads inexorably towards sickness proper as preservation, "thoroughly burnt-out... desires the ultimate stability of death, that perfect stasis wherein all combat ceases" (Ahern, 25). This produces "an organism that *prefers* what is harmful to it" (A, 6); this is sickness in the strict physiological sense" (Ahern, 25).

The final piece of the physiological puzzle concerns Nietzsche's comments on "the fundamental will of the spirit" (BGE, 230), which are explicitly tied to his physiological

standpoint. As I have discussed above, each instinct possesses a “particular valuation, mode of action, and mode of resistance” (WP, 567); as Ahern writes, “as a perspective, each drive is an *interpretation* that, being thoroughly self-absorbed, *insists* on itself as ‘truth’” (35). For this reason, each drive ‘spiritualizes’ the world according to its own perspective, “overlook[ing] or repuls[ing] whatever is totally contradictory” (BGE, 230) – ‘contradictory,’ that is, in the sense of something which contradicts its own perspective, and not in the sense of contradicting an external reality which retains a transcendent position as the final arbiter of truth. As Ahern writes, spirit, rather than “being somehow disconnected from ‘the real world,’ ...*determines* all interpretations of truth and reality” (35, emphasis added). For Nietzsche, however, “this is not a conscious activity; this is a power quantum attempting to overcome what resists it” (Ahern, 36). Each drive “involuntarily emphasizes certain features and lines in what is foreign, in every piece of ‘external world,’ retouching and falsifying the whole to suit itself” (BGE, 230). In this way, as Ahern writes,

starvation can “falsify” the most appalling filth into a banquet, the sex drive can paint anyone as desirable, and a multiplicity of self-seeking motives can justify murder.... What is particularly important is that “spirit,” as an organic process of falsification essential to growth, is the basis for Nietzsche’s vision of “untruth as a condition of life” (BGE, 4). (35-6)

The way in which an individual “spiritualizes” the world, then, will depend on the physiological dynamics of the organism. For example, a decadent individual, dominated by the drive to self-preservation, will “postulate the drive to self-preservation as the cardinal drive in an organic being” (BGE, 13); in other words, he will view the world through the lens of this drive, glorifying whatever promises comfort, security, and pity for the weak, and villainizing whatever presents itself as a threat to this security.

As Nietzsche writes, spirit's "intent in all this is to incorporate new 'experiences,' to file new things in old files – growth, in a word – or, more precisely, the *feeling* of growth, the feeling of increased power" (BGE, 230). However, he also takes note of "an apparently antithetical drive of the spirit" which he describes as

a sudden decision for ignorance, for arbitrary shutting-out, a closing of the windows, an inner denial of this or that thing, a refusal to let it approach, a kind of defensive posture against much that can be known, a contentment with the dark, with the closed horizon, an acceptance and approval of ignorance: all this being necessary according to the degree of its power to appropriate. (BGE, 230)

As Ahern points out, there is nothing arbitrary about the way in which our instincts 'falsify' the world, and our utter reliance on our instinctive 'spiritualization' of the world is what leads Nietzsche to refer to self-preservation as "the first instinct of spirituality" (TI, 9:2). As Ahern writes:

Through "spirit" all of us are shielded from the most horrifying faces of existence, since "those who know it completely would perish" (BGE, 39)... The instinct of preservation is one of the most powerful drives of the human species (GS, 1)... As the primal drive of "spirit," it fabricates the "world" in whatever way allows our survival. (36)

For this reason, despite the fact that the basic will of the spirit is to grow and expand, there are limitations on how far this expansion can go, thus necessitating the "antithetical" activity which draws a horizon of darkness around the individual. As Nietzsche writes, "this is a universal law: a living thing can be healthy, strong and fruitful only when bounded by a horizon; if it is incapable of drawing a horizon around itself... it will pine away slowly or hasten to its timely end" (UD, 1).

This brings us back to the link between the physiological economics of an individual and the relative breadth of its perspective. As I argued above, the scholarly gradation of rank from higher to lower will be determined by how much of the philosopher's comprehensive 'picture of

life' each scholar can assimilate. In a weak individual, as we have seen, the power of the drives is being squandered in all directions; in this state, the range of the spirit – the extent to which it can seek out, overwhelm, and incorporate new information – is curtailed out of necessity. A strong nature, on the other hand, will be able to incorporate more before reaching the limits of his strength; as Nietzsche writes, “the stronger the innermost roots of a man’s nature, the more readily will he be able to assimilate and appropriate” (UD, 1). Thus for Nietzsche, the dominant drive in the healthy individual is by definition the most comprehensive, in the sense that it comprehends the broadest possible range of affects; because strength is characterized by multiple voices harmonized under a single rule, the perspective that rises to consciousness is multifaceted, reflecting the combined input of all of the individual’s drives. By mastering this multiplicity through constant self-discipline, the dominant drive gains the ability to manipulate it at will, or, as Nietzsche puts it, one gains

the ability *to control* one’s Pro and Con and to dispose of them... [to] employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge.... The *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete [comprehensive] will our ‘concept’ of the thing, our ‘objectivity,’ be. (GM, 3:12)

Thus there is a clear physiological link between a high rank and a more comprehensive perspective, in that the healthiest (the thus highest-ranking) individual will be the most efficient at incorporating and assimilating new experiences and ‘digesting’ new information. To return to my original line of inquiry, that is, the task of the scholar, how does a consideration of physiological dynamics inform our reading of Nietzsche’s critique of the scholarly type? In what follows, I will look at three different incarnations of the scholarly type – the objective spirit, the skeptic, and the critic – through the lens of Nietzsche’s physiological perspective, in order to

demonstrate how the value of any given scholarly characteristic depends on the rank of the scholar in question.

§2: The Objective Spirit, the Skeptic, and the Critic

Nietzsche makes a telling observation in BGE when, after expressing gratitude to “the objective spirit”, he warns us that “in the end one has to learn to be cautious with one’s gratitude too and put a stop to the exaggerated way in which the depersonalization of the spirit is today celebrated as redemption and transfiguration, as if it were the end in itself” (207). Recalling Nietzsche’s stated purpose in “On Scholars,”⁷ this warning furthers Nietzsche’s end of reestablishing the proper order of rank between science and philosophy: the characteristics of the objective man are presented in contrast to those of the philosopher, in order to demonstrate the philosopher’s superiority. As Lampert writes:

Unlike the objective mind, “the complementary human being” (the name given here to the philosopher) has “grounds for taking sides between good and evil”; knowing those grounds and knowing as a consequence what must be done, he sets out to make the scientist the philosopher’s ally for philosophy’s ends. The proper order of rank between philosophy and science establishes an alliance in which the scientist is the instrument of the philosopher. (*Task*, 188)

On the surface, Nietzsche’s warning deals with the external hierarchy which exists between the philosopher and his servants. In this sense, Nietzsche’s point is that the objective spirit needs to recognize that it is not an end in itself, but a means toward the philosopher’s end; it is the philosopher who represents “an end, a termination and ascent, a complementary man in whom the *rest* of existence is justified, a conclusion” (BGE, 207).

⁷ Again, his stated purpose is “to combat a harmful and improper displacement of the order of rank between science and philosophy which is today, quite unnoticed and as if with a perfect good conscience, threatening to become established” (BGE, 204).

In light of Nietzsche's physiological perspective, however, we must also look at this warning in terms of the internal hierarchy manifest within the objective scholar himself. Nietzsche writes that the objective spirit is "a *mirror*... a precious, easily damaged and tarnished measuring instrument and reflecting apparatus" (BGE, 207), and as Lampert writes, this 'mirroring' entails a cost:

The passion to have no other passion but mirroring costs the objective mind the customary passions; as pure reflector he loses his familiarity with himself as person.... The great failure of objectivity is its loss of aptitude for subjectivity. ...The "cheerful totalism" of the objective mind, [his] willingness to treat everything in the same objective way, makes him a stranger to the familiar things of family and person and to the naturally primary passions of love and hate. Only in his cheerful totalism "is he still 'nature' and 'natural,'" the quotation marks signaling an altered nature, an unnatural natural that views everything in abstraction from love and hate. (*Task*, 189)

Thus the "depersonalization of the spirit" (BGE, 207) noted by Nietzsche is a symptom of the configuration of drives manifest within the objective type; the hierarchy of the drives is organized in such a way that this type is unable to "spiritualize" the world according to the perspectives of some of the human animal's most powerful drives. As Nietzsche writes, "if love and hatred are demanded of [the objective man]... he will do what he can and give what he can. But one ought not to be surprised if it is not very much" (BGE, 207). On this level, then, the warning is that when objectivity becomes the end in itself – when it is allowed to dominate the overall hierarchy of the drives – the organism as a whole suffers a loss of vitality in that it fails to achieve the optimal conditions for the enhancement of strength. In Graham Parkes' words, "if the drive for knowledge is allowed to dominate, the soul as a whole suffers through being deprived of the felt but unknowable fullness of life" (*Composing the Soul*, 92).

This, however, does not imply a state of decadence proper, as the objective type still displays the integrity characteristic of health: the problem is that this configuration of the drives

is incapable of enhancing the strength of the organism to its fullest potential. As we saw in section two above, the essential condition for decadence comes about when “the instinct of preservation siphon[s] the power of already weak drives to repress the body’s most potent sources of growth” (Ahern, 25). In the objective type, this repression is lacking; his relationship to the drives most strongly associated with subjective passion (such as love and hatred) is more like starvation than excision. As Nietzsche writes in SE, “if one accustoms oneself to translating every experience into a dialectical question-and-answer game and into an affair purely of the head, it is astonishing in how short a time such an occupation will wither a man up” (6); like prisoners fed on bread and water, the passions of love and hatred receive the minimum necessary strength to keep them functioning, while the majority of the scholar’s energies are directed towards “affairs purely of the head” (*ibid.*). This weakens these passions to the point that their authority in the hierarchy of the drives is negligible; because they serve the drive to objective knowledge, and because their services are rarely required (and are, in fact, seen as dangerous to the maintenance of an objective stance), they eventually atrophy, but are not actually combated. They encounter no resistance to their perspective, and thus have nothing to overcome as a means of increasing their power. This reduces the overall strength available to the scholar, but without undermining the integrity imposed by the dominant perspective. It is for this reason that, despite his lack of aptitude for subjectivity, the objective spirit is still of a very high rank for Nietzsche. As I have said before, the value of any characteristic depends on the physiological economics of the organism which displays it, and the value of objectivity is no different. As Nietzsche writes:

The objective man who no longer scolds or curses as the pessimist does, the *ideal* scholar in whom the scientific instinct, after thousandfold total and partial failure, for once comes to full bloom, is certainly one of the most precious instruments there are: but he belongs in the hand of one who is mightier. (BGE, 207).

Thus Nietzsche cannot be saying that the drive to objective knowledge ought not to dominate in any case. For some scholars, the ideal of objectivity will represent the highest rank they can attain, and for the philosopher to advise all scholars against allowing the drive to objectivity to dominate would, in the end, serve merely to deprive himself of some of the most valuable tools of his trade.

For a scholar capable of moving beyond the ideal of objectivity, however, it would be a waste of valuable energies to come to rest at the level of the objective man without ever attempting to reach a higher rank, and it is this type to whom Nietzsche's warning is addressed. Just as the objective spirit is the rightful servant of the philosopher, the drive to objectivity in the highest-ranking scholar must be made to serve "one who is mightier" (BGE, 207) – a dominant drive which is broad enough to encompass objectivity alongside the attendant passions of subjectivity. This, of course, entails a revaluation of objectivity, as the meaning of a drive is necessarily modified depending on its situation in the overall order of rank.⁸ Nietzsche is clear on the point that the old ideal of objectivity as "contemplation without interest... is a nonsensical absurdity" amounting to a "castrat[ion of] the intellect" (GM, 3:12), but rather than dismissing the idea of objectivity altogether he replaces it with his new formulation of objectivity as "the ability... to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge" (GM, 3:12). Objectivity, on this view, is an essentially protean phenomenon, whereby an individual has the ability to "*incorporate[e]*... knowledge and mak[e]... it instinctive" – a task which "is only beginning to dawn on the human eye and is not yet clearly discernible" (GS, 11).

⁸ As we will see, this pattern will be repeated throughout Nietzsche's discussion of the scholarly type, as he first critiques and then reevaluates the meaning of a particular scholarly characteristic on the basis of its role in the physiology of the individual.

Here, Nietzsche is drawing attention to something that a scholar always already does to some extent: to read an essay and understand it is to incorporate the perspective of its author (with greater or lesser success, depending on the scholar's powers of assimilation), and to then apply the insights gleaned from that essay to one's own work is to view that work through the lens of the new perspective, in essence utilizing it toward one's own ends. Thus the breadth of a scholar's overall perspective will depend on the range of perspectives he is able to incorporate in this manner; some scholars will be limited to perspectives which are more or less similar to their own (as with a scholar who specializes in one particular branch of knowledge, like the scholar in *Z* (4:4) who devotes his life to understanding the brain of the leech), while others will be able to range further afield. The former, again, remains highly useful to the philosopher, as such a scholar can afford a more detailed perspective on his area of expertise, whereas one who takes a broader view must necessarily sacrifice some level of detail in his understanding of any one phenomenon. In order to gain the broadest perspective on the philosopher's comprehensive portrait of life, however, which as I have argued is the defining characteristic of the highest-ranking scholar, the high-ranking scholar must understand in himself the effects of love and hatred upon his own psyche; a proposition not without its dangers, as we will see following my discussion of skepticism below.

In his essay entitled "Nietzsche on the Skeptics and Nietzsche as Skeptic," Richard Bett explores "the question of Nietzsche's knowledge of, and attitudes towards, Greek skepticism, and... consider[s], in light of that exploration, the relations between his philosophical ideas and those ideas standardly thought of as skeptical" (63). What is notably absent from Bett's inquiry is a consideration of the physiological basis of skepticism: Physiology is mentioned once as an aside, where Bett writes that, for Nietzsche, "philosophies and religions are expressions of the

psychology – or even, as he sometimes says, the physiology – of their creators” (76). This point neatly sidesteps the fact that, for Nietzsche, a thinker’s psychology is, at bottom, an expression of his physiology; the two factors, as we have seen, cannot be divorced from one another. Bett’s oversight leads him to observe that “Nietzsche is notably ambivalent towards skepticism,” in the sense that “the answer to the question ‘Is Nietzsche a skeptic?’ is ‘yes and no’” (72). I will argue that it is only against the background of the physiological underpinnings of skepticism that this apparent ambivalence can be resolved: whether Nietzsche is for or against skepticism does not depend on some essential feature of skepticism ‘as such,’ but on the way in which skepticism is used by an individual. In other words, the question is not ‘Is Nietzsche a skeptic?’ but ‘*To what end* is Nietzsche a skeptic?’.

Bett identifies two different conceptions of traditional skepticism: the first, which he calls skepticism “in the loose sense” (69), “center[s] around the difficulty or impossibility of determining how the world really, objectively is; this applies just as much, say, to Sextus [Empiricus] as to Descartes’ *First Meditation*” (70). Thus it is not incorrect to call Nietzsche a skeptic to the extent that “he makes common cause with the skeptics in their opposition to the traditional pretensions of philosophy” (72). However, Bett goes on to point out that

this way of thinking of course takes for granted the legitimacy of the *concept* of ‘the way the world really, objectively is’; it makes no sense to worry about whether we can know how things are in themselves if one rejects the very notion of ‘how things are in themselves’. Thus, by a stricter and more precise standard, it is fair to say that someone who actually does reject this notion is *not* a skeptic.
(70)

In this light, despite Nietzsche’s “common cause” with the skeptics, the fact that “he rejects, much of the time, the traditional conception of objective truth – which the skeptics accept – [shows that] he is also importantly at odds with them” (72). This apparent ambivalence extends

to Nietzsche's evaluation of the ancient skeptics; on the one hand, they are lauded for being cognizant of "the first requirements of intellectual honesty" (A, 12), while on the other they are censured as decadents or nihilists.⁹ As Bett writes,

In *The Gay Science* skepticism and honesty are... spoken of in the same breath [110]; but in the very next section skepticism – and specifically that form of it, the ancient form, that consists in suspension of judgment – is described as a danger for life. (75)

However, even this conception of skepticism as suspension of judgment is given a positive evaluation in some parts of Nietzsche's corpus; in A, for example, Nietzsche

describes "philology" as "in a very broad sense, the art of reading well"... [and] characterizes philology... as "*ephexis* in interpretation" [A, 52]. *Ephexis*, at least as Nietzsche appears to intend it here, means something like 'restraint'; but it is a close etymological correlate of [*epoché*], the Pyrrhonists' standard term for suspension of judgment, and Nietzsche must have been aware of this. Responsible and honest thought, then... requires the kind of caution exhibited preeminently by the skeptics. (Bett, 73)

The point here, for the purposes of my argument, is that no matter which interpretation or characteristic of skepticism you put forward, you will find evidence that Nietzsche is both for and against it, a point which seems to lend force to the charge of ambivalence. To my mind, however, the answer to the question 'Is Nietzsche a skeptic?' is 'No – he is a philosopher'; skepticism, like objectivity, is a tool in Nietzsche's hands, and not an end in itself.

Bett makes the telling observation that whether Nietzsche approves of or criticizes skepticism seems to depend on context: as he writes, "Nietzsche's positive assessments of skepticism are typically connected with his critiques of various forms of philosophical or religious dogmatism" (76), whereas his negative comments center on the skeptics' "emasculated ideal... of [*ataraxia* (tranquility)]... [and] their willingness... to posit a real or metaphysical

⁹ WP, 43 states that "skepticism is a consequence of decadence," while WP, 437 refers to "the nihilist Pyrrho."

world (albeit one about which they make no definite claim)” (77). As we will see, his negative comments deal with skepticism as a means to the end of self-preservation, while his positive comments deal with it as a means to the end of enhanced strength. Again, while Nietzsche might be superficially ambivalent about skepticism ‘as such,’ he is never ambivalent about his diagnoses of strength and weakness; the question becomes, what does a specific use of skepticism say about the underlying physiology of the individual who uses it in that manner?

This question can be resolved through an appeal to BGE, where Nietzsche first criticizes skepticism which is geared towards *ataraxia* (BGE, 208) and then brings a “new and stronger species of skepticism” (209) to light. Unlike the section on the objective spirit, the first section on skepticism discusses the physiological dynamics of the skeptic explicitly; as Nietzsche writes:

Scepticism is the most spiritual expression of a certain complex physiological condition called in ordinary language nervous debility and sickliness; it arises whenever races or classes long separated from one another are decisively and suddenly crossed.¹⁰ In the new generation, which has as it were inherited varying standards and values in its blood, all is unrest, disorder, doubt, experiment; the most vital forces have a retarding effect, the virtues themselves will not let one another grow and become strong, equilibrium, centre of balance, upright certainty are lacking in body and soul. But that which becomes most profoundly sick and degenerates in such hybrids is the *will*: they no longer have any conception of independence of decision, of the valiant feeling of pleasure in willing – even in their dreams they doubt the ‘freedom of the will’. (208)

This recalls Ahern’s discussion of weakness, which he described as “psychological fragmentation as the physiological affect of disparate, unharnessed instincts” (21). By contrast with the objective type, who displays a “perilous unconcernedness over Yes and No” (BGE, 207), the skeptic’s “conscience is schooled to wince at every No, indeed even at a hard decisive

¹⁰ It is perhaps significant that Bett, while drawing support from the fact that Nietzsche “describes skepticism... as a symptom of ‘nervous exhaustion and sickliness,’” sees fit to “part company with him” on the notion that this “sickliness [is] brought on by the mixing of races and classes” (78); this indicates that he has set out to determine the *meaning* of skepticism for Nietzsche while deliberately rejecting, for whatever reason, Nietzsche’s account of the *cause* of skepticism.

Yes, and to sense something like a sting. Yes! and No! – that is to him contrary to morality” (BGE, 208). As Lampert writes, modern skeptics “view nonskepticism as an explosive threatening their world: the morality of fearfulness embraced by modern skepticism cannot welcome a new knowledge of Yes! and No! that inevitably leads to decisive, negating action” (*Task*, 191). The problem here is not that a skeptical drive dominates the scholar, but that no drive is capable of establishing dominance. Pulled in all directions at once by the conflict among the drives, none of which is strong enough to make its voice heard with any authority, the skeptic doubts the possibility of authoritative knowledge as such; being characterized primarily by the inability to take a stance, he claims that there is, in fact, no stance to take. Nietzsche is clear on the fact that this form of skepticism is a self-preservative measure; as he tells us:

Against... [the] will to the actual active denial of life... there is today confessedly no better sedative and soporific than scepticism, the gentle, gracious, lulling poppy scepticism; and even *Hamlet* is prescribed by the doctors of our time against the ‘spirit’ and its noises under the ground. (BGE, 208)

In Lampert’s words, “skepticism is a palliative against the turbulence of the times” (*Task*, 191): threatened by chaos within and without, the skeptic “defends genuine ignorance for its utility as a calming device” (*ibid.*) – hence the use of skepticism towards the end of *ataraxia* is condemned by Nietzsche as a symptom of decline.

For this reason, Nietzsche’s polemic against skepticism is aimed at forcing “the spiritual caste of scholars and scientists [to] recognize... the epistemological and practical limits on its legitimate skepticism” (Lampert, *Task*, 192). In terms of Nietzsche’s political project, this form of skepticism, by suspending all judgment *on principle*, threatens the order of rank between science and philosophy by “disarm[ing the philosopher] into observer status” (*Task*, 192). The task of genuine philosophy, again, is

to achieve the most comprehensive perspective, out of which new values are created... [and] this perspective, once gained, transform[s] observers into combatants whose new values make them philosophy's allies in a fight for the European future. (*Task*, 13)

For Nietzsche, the philosopher, rather than being a mere observer, is a “historical actor... forced by his insight [about the way of all beings] into the responsibility of action” (*Task*, 193); skepticism as “paralysis of will” (BGE, 208), by denying the possibility of gaining insight which is sufficiently decisive to furnish grounds for action, denies the possibility of philosophy itself. Thus it is clear that Nietzsche himself cannot be considered a skeptic in this sense, nor can he be interpreted as advocating this form of skepticism in any way.

Because part of the project of creating new values is the forging of a new intellectual conscience,¹¹ “a resolute inner commander wholly detached from its initial formation as the voice of God or the forefathers” (*Task*, 178), Nietzsche requires servants trained in a “more dangerous and harder new species of skepticism” (BGE, 209). The foregoing account of skepticism dealt with “the incurable wretchedness of a heart which is no longer hard enough for evil or for good, of a broken will which no longer commands, *can* no longer command” (BGE, 209); the revaluation of skepticism presented in §209, on the other hand, is closely related to the ability to command oneself. As we saw earlier, Nietzsche advocates a form of “philology as *ephexis* in interpretation” which consists of the ability “to read off a fact *without* falsifying it by interpretation, *without* losing caution, patience, subtlety in the desire for understanding” (A, 52). Bett, as cited above, translates *ephexis* as “restraint” (73) and reveals its etymological kinship with *epoché* as suspension of judgment. In form, then, the skepticism of strength is very similar to that arising out of weakness; the difference is, whereas the latter is a self-preservative measure

¹¹ Nietzsche refers in BGE to “a revaluation of values under whose novel pressure and hammer a conscience would be steeled, a heart transformed to brass, so that it might endure the weight of... responsibility” (203).

against the weak individual's inability not to react, the former consists in precisely the ability to exercise restraint in one's reactions to a stimulus – it is, in essence, the *ability* not to react immediately, whereby an individual suspends judgment on a perspective until it can be incorporated.

Nietzsche tells us that this “new and stronger species of skepticism” is “most closely related to genius for war and conquest” (BGE, 209). In the context of the internal hierarchy of the drives, the “genius for war and conquest” refers to the individual's war against itself, to “warlikeness turned inward and commanding mastery over its powerful drives” (*Task*, 171). This war is referred to throughout BGE as the struggle between the heart and the mind: Nietzsche tells us very early in the text that “a genuine physio-psychology has to struggle with unconscious resistances in the heart of the investigator, it has ‘the heart’ against it” (23); thus,

because the loves and hates of the investigator's heart resist the conclusions of the mind, the only course open is the one suggested in an aphorism this section [23] elaborates: ‘*Bound heart, free mind*. – If one binds one's heart with hardness and imprisons it, one can give one's mind many liberties” (87). (*Task*, 58)

Later, Lampert describes the “intellectual conscience” as Nietzsche understands it as “the vice by which the mind rules the heart” (*Task*, 103), and this theme is brought up explicitly in the section on the skepticism of strength: Nietzsche writes that this form of skepticism “gives perilous liberty to the spirit [*Geist*/intellect] but it keeps firm hold on the heart” (BGE, 209). Skeptics of this type, as “artists in destruction and disintegration” (BGE, 209), are characterized by “intrepidity of eye... bravery and sternness of dissecting hand... [and] tenacious will for perilous voyages of discovery” (BGE, 209). Rather than defending genuine ignorance, the new skepticism uses doubt as a tool in the service of truth; it is an invaluable aid to the mind's rule over the heart. Thus it is to this end that Nietzsche himself can be seen as a skeptic, despite the

fact that he “has long since made it obvious that he’s no skeptic regarding nature as a whole – to be is to be will to power” (*Task*, 187).

The full significance of the skepticism of strength, however, only becomes clear when considered in concert with Nietzsche’s revaluation of objectivity. For Nietzsche, neither objectivity nor skepticism is qualified to dominate the hierarchy of the drives in the high-ranking scholar. As subordinate drives, however, they must serve alongside one another in a manner that complements the strengths of each. The problem with objectivity on its own is that it is form without content; in Nietzsche’s words, the objective man is “a delicate, empty, elegant, flexible mould which has first to wait for some content so as ‘to form’ itself by it – as a rule a man without content, a ‘selfless’ man” (BGE, 207). Because the objective spirit displays a “perilous unconcernedness over Yes and No” (BGE, 207) it is capable of adapting itself uncritically to any perspective which presents itself; its intent is not to evaluate a perspective but only to understand it. It is for this reason that the lower-order manifestation of the objective spirit abdicates its subjectivity: in order to remain ‘objective’ it has to weaken the influence of the stronger drives associated with subjective passion – it has to “*castrate the intellect*” (GM, 3:12) in order to keep its perspective free of the compromising influence of subjectivity.

As I argued above, however, objectivity in the higher-order scholar cannot be practiced at the expense of the powerful passions associated with subjectivity such as love and hatred, because in order for the scholar to achieve the optimal conditions for the enhancement of strength he must be able to draw on the full range of his drives. This means, again, that he must be able to understand the full force of love and hatred within himself, as his assimilation of Nietzsche’s ‘picture of life’ cannot be complete if these passions are disregarded. This, then, leaves him open to the tyrannical influence of the strongest drives; as Nietzsche writes, each

drive “would be only too glad to present *itself* as the ultimate goal of existence and as the legitimate *master* of all the other drives” (BGE, 6). Because the objective spirit is open to adapting itself to any perspective which presents itself, he runs the risk of *being convinced* by a perspective which carries the full force of a powerful drive behind it; he runs the risk of his love for or his hatred of a particular perspective subverting his ability to incorporate other perspectives. In other words, he runs the risk of allowing his heart to dictate to his mind, and of becoming dogmatic in his opinions. For this reason, while he must be able to add the voices of his most powerful drives to his “spiritualization” of the world, he must be able to do this without allowing any one drive to convince him that *its* perspective is authoritative.

As we saw, Nietzsche advocated the use of skepticism to the end of undermining religious or philosophical dogmatism, and here we see that the primary use of the skepticism of strength is to combat the dogmatic effects of powerful drives within oneself. Nietzsche lists several of the most dangerous convictions which must come under the scalpel of doubt in order for the high-ranking scholar to proceed with his task; as he writes:

One should not avoid one's tests, although they are perhaps the most dangerous game one could play and are in the end tests which are taken before ourselves and before no other judge. Not to cleave to another person, though he be the one you love most – every person is a prison, also a nook and corner. Not to cleave to a fatherland, though it be the most suffering and in need of help – it is already easier to sever your heart from a victorious fatherland. Not to cleave to a feeling of pity, though it be for higher men into whose rare torment and helplessness chance allowed us to look. Not to cleave to a science, though it lures one with the most precious discoveries seemingly reserved precisely for *us*. Not to cleave to one's own detachment, to that voluptuous remoteness and strangeness of the bird which flies higher and higher so as to see more and more beneath it – the danger which threatens the flier. Not to cleave to our own virtues and become as a whole the victim of some part of us, of our ‘hospitality’ for example, which is the danger of dangers for rich and noble souls who expend themselves prodigally, almost indifferently, and take the virtue of liberality to the point where it becomes a vice. (BGE, 41)

These are the most dangerous convictions precisely due to their appeal to the heart; it is one thing to overturn a conviction produced in abstraction from love and hatred – for example, it is not difficult to accept a new and better hypothesis as to the workings of the brain of the leech – but it is another thing altogether to overturn a conviction arising from one's powerful devotion to a person, nation, religious teaching, etc. For this reason, the primary task of the skeptic is not to turn his skepticism outward, doubting and denying phenomena in the external world; this is a derivative task, resulting from the internal application of skepticism. The significance of the skepticism of strength lies first and foremost in one's ability to take the scalpel of doubt to oneself, in order to consciously and continually dissect one's own convictions. By pruning away those instincts which would confine the scholar to a particular corner of life, the new skepticism allows a scholar to venture into previously forbidden territory – “into the depths” (BGE, 23), as Nietzsche puts it – even when what is discovered there is painful or disturbing.

Thus the role of skepticism in the high-ranking scholar is to safeguard the mind from forming convictions; more precisely, as in many cases a conviction *must* be formed in order to adequately understand the perspective of a drive, skepticism is the force which allows one to free oneself from a particular conviction once it has been formed. Nietzsche explicitly links skepticism to freedom from convictions in a passage from A, which I will cite at length:

One should not let oneself be misled: great intellects are sceptics. Zarathustra is a sceptic. The vigour of a mind, its *freedom* through strength and superior strength, is *proved* by scepticism. Men of conviction simply do not come into consideration where the fundamentals of value and disvalue are concerned. Convictions are prisons. They do not see far enough, they do not see things *beneath* them: but to be permitted to speak about value and disvalue one must see five hundred convictions *beneath* one – *behind* one.... A spirit which wants to do great things, which also wills the means for it, is necessarily a sceptic. Freedom from convictions of any kind, the *capacity* for an unconstrained view, *pertains* to strength.... Grand passion, the ground and force of his being, even more enlightened, more despotic than he himself is, takes his whole intellect into its

service; it makes him intrepid; it even gives him the courage for unholy means; if need be it *permits* him convictions. Conviction as a *means*: there is much one can achieve only by means of a conviction. Grand passion uses and uses up convictions, it does not submit to them – it knows itself sovereign. (A, 54)¹²

Because strength lies in the ability “to will, and to will one thing for a long time” (BGE, 208) – physiologically speaking, in the ability of a single drive (a “grand passion”) to gain and retain command of the hierarchy of the drives – the skepticism of strength, paired with the reformulation of objectivity under the domination of this single goal, ruthlessly undermines anything which stands in the way of achieving this goal, especially those beliefs which are closest to the investigator’s heart. In other words, the skepticism of strength arises at the juncture of objectivity and skepticism: the “perilous liberty” granted to the mind or spirit (BGE, 209) refers to the scholar’s ability to range ever wider in its incorporation of new perspectives, while the ingredient of skepticism provides the element of restraint necessary to keep the strongest passions (“the heart”) in check – it provides the element of *control* in the “ability to control one’s Pro and Con” (GM, 3:12).

At first glance, however, it seems that this scenario leaves us in the same position as the skepticism of weakness: objectivity incorporates and assimilates new perspectives which skepticism eventually undermines, weakening their influence over the scholar’s mind and leaving him without any knowledge which can be considered authoritative. This, however, is where the task of criticism comes in: the skepticism of strength, in undermining a position, does so in order to free the scholar from its influence; this freedom then allows him to engage it critically. The interrelationship between objectivity, skepticism and criticism is as follows: objectivity, with its “unconcernedness over Yes and No” (BGE, 207), will incorporate any

¹² All ellipses in this passage are Nietzsche’s.

position; it is mitigated by skepticism which restrains the influence of the drives that would like to *force* a Yes or No on the scholar: skepticism allows one to incorporate a position without believing in it, to take possession of it without being possessed by it. Criticism, then, *evaluates* this position; it *gives reasons* for saying either Yes or No to it. In this sense, while objectivity and skepticism go hand in hand, limiting and complementing one another, the task of criticism subsumes both: it presupposes the ability to incorporate a new perspective while remaining sufficiently free of its influence to bring criticism to bear on it.

In terms of the order of rank between science and philosophy, Nietzsche is clear on the point that “critics are the philosophers’ instruments and for that reason very far from being philosophers themselves” (BGE, 210); it is, as he says, an insult to philosophy “when it is decreed, as is so happily done today: ‘Philosophy itself is criticism and critical science – and nothing whatever besides!’” (BGE, 210). In Lampert’s words, “philosophy has been disgraced by being limited in this Kantian way to one of its essential functions; more tellingly, philosophy has come to be ruled by science because of that limitation, because it has been deprived of its truly defining activity” (*Task*, 195). This defining activity, again, is the creation of values, which is the one task that the scholar is barred from: the scholar by definition works within the context of values which have been legislated by the philosopher. This is the basis of Nietzsche’s evaluation of Kant as a scholar and not a philosopher proper. Because Kant never freed himself from the sway of values originally legislated by Plato, but engaged these values critically and “reduce[d] them to formulas” (BGE, 211), Nietzsche judges that “even the great Chinaman of Königsberg was only a great critic” (BGE, 210). In SE, Nietzsche writes that “he who thinks that in saying this I am doing Kant a great injustice does not know what a philosopher is” (7); Kant, as a “noble exemplar” of a “philosophical labourer,” performed a “tremendous and wonderful

task” (BGE, 211) for philosophy, and is thus deserving of the highest respect, but this task was carried out in the service of Platonism.

Nietzsche provides us with a list of five “serious and not indubious qualities which distinguish the critic from the skeptic,” and which the high-ranking scholar can by no means do without: these are “certainty in standards of value, conscious employment of a unity of method, instructed courage, independence and ability to justify oneself” (BGE, 210). The distinction between the critic and the skeptic becomes apparent through a consideration, again, of Kant: on Nietzsche’s view, Kant possessed all of these five qualities; he stands as the exemplar of “a great critic” (BGE, 210); the problem is that he lacked the ingredient of hard-hearted skepticism necessary to bring him to interrogate his fundamental convictions. This lack of sufficient skepticism is one of the criticisms that Nietzsche throws at “metaphysicians of all ages” in the first chapter of BGE; as he writes:

The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is *the faith in antithetical values*. It has not occurred to even the most cautious of them to pause and doubt here on the threshold, where however it was most needful they should: even if they *had* vowed to themselves ‘*de omnibus dubitandum*’. (BGE, 2)

Rather than binding the heart firmly to allow the mind to rule, Kant sacrificed the mind for the sake of the heart; as he said himself, he undertook his *Critique of Pure Reason* “to deny **knowledge** in order to make room for **faith**” (Pref. B, xxx). Thus Nietzsche’s antipathy towards Kant arises less from his estimation of the value of Kant’s project than from the fact that Kant remained under the sway of Christian-Platonic morality. As Alistair Moles has noted, “it has been remarked by many commentators how indebted Nietzsche’s epistemology is to that of Kant; also how seldom he acknowledges this debt” (62): despite their similarities, it is the end

toward which Kant pursued his critique which renders him suspect in Nietzsche's eyes, and not the critique itself.

As I stated earlier, the task of criticism is to give reasons for saying Yes or No to a position; the hardness of conscience displayed by the high-ranking scholar excludes the possibility that he will "consort with 'truth' so as to be 'pleased' by it or 'elevated' and 'inspired' – [he] will rather be little disposed to believe that *truth* of all things should be attended by such pleasures" (BGE, 210). In other words, the reasons that this scholar will give for accepting or rejecting a position will not be dictated by the heart; he will respond with "a feeling of genuine disgust for all such fawning enthusiasm, idealism, feminism, hermaphroditism" (*ibid.*). This is one reason why the chapter of BGE devoted to the scholarly virtues climaxes with an argument for cruelty.¹³ As Nietzsche writes, the critic must be capable of "taking a *pleasure* in negating and dissecting and... [in] a certain self-possessed cruelty which knows how to wield the knife with certainty and deftness even when the heart bleeds" (BGE, 210). This is necessary because one of the most important values that must be overturned is precisely the value of truth; as Lampert writes:

Nietzsche argues that the old philosophy, instead of raising the question of the value of truth, assumed its supreme value and asked only about the origin of this valuable thing. But to assume the value of truth for human beings is to assume that there is consonance or harmony between truth and our natures, that truth is what we are naturally fitted for.... Nietzsche intimates that, on the contrary, truth is deadly. And if it is deadly, if truth puts everything at risk, then the old belief of Platonism that truth is what we are naturally fitted for required that the real truth be falsified, lied about. The "truths" of the old philosophy were edifying myths, beginning with the myth that truth is edifying. Our most indispensable lie is our belief in the goodness of truth. The risk in questioning the value of truth lies in the

¹³ As Lampert writes, "*Beyond Good and Evil* attains one of its greatest summits when the argument of 'Our Virtues' climaxes as a case for cruelty, the cruelty of truth telling, the cruelty of the new philosopher who knows why he refuses Platonism, the philosophy whose noble lying aligned philosophy with the basic will of the mind to be comforted and at ease" (*Task*, 208).

likelihood that it will destroy the falsifications that have sustained human life and force humanity to face truth's deadliness. That truth is deadly is the deadliest truth. (*Task*, 21)

Because truth is deadly, the scholar must be hard enough to withstand the suffering occasioned by his exposure to the truth at Nietzsche's hands; as Nietzsche writes: "The discipline of suffering, of *great* suffering – do you not know that it is *this* discipline which has created every elevation of mankind hitherto?" (BGE, 225). Thus on Nietzsche's view, by allowing the heart to rule the mind via their belief in the essential goodness of truth, scholars in the Platonic line have denied the cruelty inherent to knowledge and have thus choked off the most potent means of enhancing the human species. The scholar in Nietzsche's service, on the other hand, must be able to reevaluate his relationship to suffering as such, and harden himself not only to his own suffering but to that of others. It is for this reason that hardness of conscience is indispensable to the Nietzsche scholar: if we are not naturally fitted for truth, we must *make* ourselves fit for truth.

As early as SE, Nietzsche was engaged in a revaluation of what it means to criticize a philosophical position; as he writes:

The only critique of a philosophy that is possible and that proves something, namely trying to see whether one can live in accordance with it, has never been taught at universities: all that has ever been taught is a critique of words by means of other words. (8)

In GS, Nietzsche draws the distinction between thinking and knowing, claiming that "consciousness has developed only under the pressure of the need for communication" (354, emphasis removed) and that, in order to communicate, man,

as the most endangered animal... had to learn to express his distress and to make himself understood; and for... this he needed "consciousness" first of all, he needed to "know" himself what distressed him, he needed to "know" how he felt, he needed to "know" what he thought. For, to say it once more: Man, like every

living being, thinks continually without knowing it; the thinking that rises to *consciousness* is only the smallest part of all this. (*ibid.*)

Because conscious thought – the “thinking [which] *takes the form of words*” (GS, 354) – is a derivative phenomenon passively reflecting “nothing but a *certain behavior of the instincts toward one another*” (GS, 333), any criticism which can be expressed in words has already been interpreted through and through by the drives; conscious thought is “the most superficial and worst part” (GS, 354) of thinking, and thus “a critique of words by means of other words” (SE, 8) is itself “shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, sign, herd signal” (GS, 354). The essential point, here, is that criticism as Nietzsche understands it is an instinctive phenomenon; as he writes:

Before knowledge is possible, each of [the] instincts must first have presented its onesided view of the thing or event; after this comes the fight of these onesided views, and... the last scenes of reconciliation and the final accounting rise to our consciousness. (GS, 333)

Thus, because the conclusions drawn by this battle will depend on which instincts can assert themselves with the most authority, the direction a critique will take, the “final accounting” which rises to consciousness, will depend on the order of rank which exists among the scholar’s drives. Because the high-ranking scholar is, by definition, healthy, his instincts are characterized by reliability; he is able to ‘trust his instincts.’ Due to the fact that all of his drives are harmonized towards the goal of enhanced strength, the criticism which rises to consciousness is a reliable evaluation of the relative rank of any given perspective. In other words, this scholar *instinctively* rejects or approves a perspective depending on whether it is detrimental or conducive to the enhancement of overall strength, and only later understands this reaction consciously; the evaluation itself is made long before he is able to put it into words.

Furthermore, because the Nietzsche scholar is forbidden antithetical values as a standard, the task of criticism as Nietzsche understands it cannot be aimed at determining the truth or falsity of a position. As he writes, “what compels us to assume there exists any essential antithesis between ‘true’ and ‘false’? Is it not enough to suppose grades of apparentness and as it were lighter and darker shades and tones of appearance – different *valeurs*, to speak in the language of painters?” (BGE, 34). Lampert elaborates on this point as follows:

Lovers of truth at the end of the moral period must learn to treat their prejudice [that truth is worth more than appearance] in a mature manner.... As rare lovers of a beloved with scant appeal to others, they must learn new approaches to truth that acknowledge the deceptiveness of their own faculties as well as the value of deception for life. Nietzsche asks his readers to admit “this much at least: no life at all would exist if not on the ground of perspectival evaluations and apparentnesses.” Such an admission of the perspectival would bring thinkers into alignment with “the fundamental condition of all life” (preface), terminating Platonism’s antilife opposition of true and false. (*Task*, 82)

Instead of truth and falsity, the standard of value that must be applied to every perspective with certainty is precisely its value (or disvalue) for life; criticism is undertaken for the sake of determining whether a perspective is conducive or detrimental to the enhancement of human life. In other words, criticism, as a tool and not an end in itself, has as its goal the task of establishing an order of rank among a multiplicity of perspectives; criticism as such determines the *relative* value of a position, and it is for this reason that it presupposes the preliminary tasks of objectivity and skepticism. In order to determine the rank of any given position one must be capable of experiencing many different and contradictory perspectives within oneself; as Nietzsche writes, “ultimately nobody can get more out of things... than he already knows. For what one lacks access to from experience one will have no ear” (EH, 3:1).

§3: The Free Spirit

In his 1886 preface to *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche devotes half a dozen pages to outlining the nature and task of the ‘free spirits’ to whom HH is dedicated. His description of this type, significantly enough, touches on all the qualities of his revaluations of objectivity, skepticism and criticism as I have discussed them in my analysis. Leaving aside for the moment his lengthy account of the first step in the evolution of the free spirit, which he describes as the “*great liberation*” of a man who had been “previously... all the more a fettered spirit and seemed to be chained for ever to its pillar and corner” (3), I will move directly to his account of the eventual result of this liberation, which he describes as follows:

From this morbid isolation... it is still a long road to that tremendous overflowing certainty and health which may not dispense even with wickedness, to that *mature* freedom of spirit which is equally self-mastery and discipline of the heart and permits access to many and contradictory modes of thought – to that inner spaciousness and indulgence of superabundance which excludes the danger that the spirit may even on its own road perhaps lose itself and become infatuated and remain seated intoxicated in some corner or other, to that superfluity of formative, creative, moulding and restorative forces which is precisely the sign of *great* health, that superfluity which grants to the free spirit the dangerous privilege of living *experimentally* and of being allowed to offer itself to adventure: the master’s privilege of the free spirit! (4)

In this passage, we see the dual influences of objectivity, the “access to many and contradictory modes of thought,” and skepticism, which is responsible for the “self-mastery and discipline of the heart... which excludes the danger that the spirit may... lose itself and become infatuated” (*ibid.*). In terms of the development of the free spirit following its liberation from its former chains, Nietzsche indicates that objectivity in its prototypical form – i.e., the desire to incorporate diverse and contradictory perspectives, though lacking as yet the element of control apparent in the mature freedom of spirit – is the characteristic which arises first. Nietzsche describes this stage as the advent of “a more and more perilous curiosity” which asks: “Can *all* values not be

turned round? and is good perhaps evil? and God only an invention and finesse of the Devil? Is everything perhaps in the last resort false? And if we are deceived, are we not for that reason also deceivers? *must* we not be deceivers?" (HH, Pref., 3). It is only later that the mitigating element of skepticism arises as a consequence of this initial, fearless inquisitiveness; as Nietzsche writes, this spirit reaches "a midway condition" in which "one lives no longer in the fetters of love and hatred, without yes, without no.... One is spoiled, as everyone is who has at some time seen a tremendous number of things *beneath* him" (4). This indicates that the spirit has gone through any number of convictions and subsequently shed them, leaving him with "the *capacity* for an unconstrained view [which] *pertains* to strength" (A, 54) and freeing him for "the dangerous privilege of living *experimentally*" (HH, 4).

Before moving on to the addition of criticism to these two qualities, I will argue in light of the above passage that both 'experimenter' and 'free spirit' are Nietzsche's designations for the highest possible rank of scholar. In saying this, I have arguably left myself open to the accusation that I have conflated the scholar with the philosopher, as it is well known that Nietzsche 'baptized' the philosophers of the future with the name *Versucher* (BGE, 42). This term can be understood in four senses: as Lampert tells us, the most important senses are those of 'experimenter' and 'tempter,' followed by 'attempter' and finally 'essayier,' in the sense of being "essayists or essayers whose natural mode of expression is the essay or aphorism" (*Task*, 95-6). However, despite the fact that this name is given to the philosopher and not the scholar, in BGE both experiment (210) and the free spirit (211) are named as "*preconditions* of [the philosopher's] task" (211, emphasis added) and not as constituting the philosopher's task as such. As I argued in section two above, while even the highest-ranking scholar cannot be considered a philosopher in the strict sense, his task will more closely resemble that of the

philosopher than that of the lower-order scholars, and here we see that the highest-rank that can be reached by a scholar without crossing the line into the philosopher's territory is that of the free spirit. This line, to say it again, lies between the interpretation versus the creation of values, and in his description of the free spirit's task Nietzsche makes no mention of value creation. Because the preface to HH was written in the same year as the publication of BGE, it cannot be argued that Nietzsche had not yet made the scholar/philosopher distinction; thus it can be safely concluded that Nietzsche himself did not restrict his usage of *Versucher* and free spirit to the philosopher alone.

Criticism is the stage, following the preparatory stages of objectivity and skepticism, wherein the free spirit finally "begins to unveil the riddle of that great liberation which had until then waited dark, questionable, almost untouchable in his memory" (6). In his description of the task of the free spirit, Nietzsche elaborates further on the traits of objectivity and skepticism and introduces criticism, understood as outlined above as the problem of order of rank. As he writes:

'You shall become master over yourself, master also over your virtues. Formerly *they* were your masters; but they must be only your instruments beside other instruments. You shall get control over your For and Against and learn how to display first one and then the other in accordance with your higher goal. You shall learn to grasp the sense of perspective in every value judgement – the displacement, distortion and merely apparent teleology of horizons and whatever else pertains to perspectivism; also the quantum of stupidity that resides in antitheses of values and the whole intellectual loss which every For, every Against costs us. You shall learn to grasp the *necessary* injustice in every For and Against, injustice as inseparable from life, life itself as *conditioned* by the sense of perspective and its injustice. You shall above all see with your own eyes where injustice is always at its greatest: where life has developed at its smallest, narrowest, neediest, most incipient and yet cannot avoid taking *itself* as the goal and measure of things and for the sake of its own preservation secretly and meanly and ceaselessly crumbling away and calling into question the higher, greater, richer – you shall see with your own eyes the problem of *order of rank*, and how power and right and spaciousness of perspective grow into the heights together. (6)

This passage not only ties together objectivity, skepticism and criticism into a single task under a “higher goal,” it reintroduces the idea of comprehensiveness or “spaciousness of perspective” (*ibid.*) which I argued above is the mark of a high-ranking scholar. Given the fact that the free spirit finds his task in “the problem of *order of rank*” (7), his higher goal, essentially, is to achieve the most comprehensive perspective on Nietzsche’s philosophy by living his life as an experiment in Nietzschean evaluation. That is to say, the dominant or unifying perspective under which the free spirit’s instincts are harmonized is precisely Nietzsche’s perspective: the free spirit carries out his task by imposing Nietzsche’s hierarchy of values upon himself in order to survey his entire life through the lens of Nietzsche’s philosophy. As I argued above, the rank of a scholar will depend on the ‘digestive power’ of his spirit; the free spirit, as the highest possible manifestation of the Nietzsche scholar, will be the scholar who is capable of quite literally incorporating Nietzsche’s values wholesale and making them instinctive. As Nietzsche writes: “Let us not undervalue this: *we ourselves*, we free spirits, are already a ‘revaluation of all values’, an *incarnate* declaration of war and victory over all ancient conceptions of ‘true’ and ‘untrue’” (A, 12).

Given the nature of the relationship between the philosopher and the scholar as one of commanding and obeying, however, it is important not to mistake the reactive force, here, for the active one, and vice versa. While the free spirit is himself an experimenter, in a more fundamental sense he is the experiment: Nietzsche is not simply sitting back and hoping that the right kind of reader will come along and choose to serve him, he is “reach[ing] for the future with creative hands” (BGE, 211) – with his hammer, as he sometimes puts it – and shaping the kind of reader he needs. At bottom, though we scholars think we are making use of Nietzsche’s work, he is actually making use of *us*; as he writes, “everything that is or has been becomes for

[the philosopher] a means, an instrument, a hammer” (BGE, 211). Nietzsche is not one to pass up any opportunity to further his own ends, and he makes what use he can of any reader who ventures into his territory. If he can make no use of you at all, he either discards you as incurable or makes you into his enemy; the latter is preferable, as it forces you to squander your strength in a futile battle with him, accelerating yourself along the path to your timely end. This battle is futile because Nietzsche knows he is strong enough to withstand your attack, and in the end by providing resistance to his perspective you only make him stronger. He reserves his best weapons, however, for those who are open to him, and once he has ‘hooked’ such a reader he goes to work on him, shaping him as far as the reader’s ability allows. Thus the highest-ranking Nietzsche scholar will be the one capable of sacrificing himself to Nietzsche, of offering up his entire life as raw material for Nietzsche’s experiment and allowing Nietzsche to do as he must. In Nietzsche’s words, “the essential thing ‘in heaven and upon earth’ seems... to be a protracted *obedience* in *one* direction: from out of that there always emerges and has always emerged in the long run something for the sake of which it is worthwhile to live on earth” (BGE, 188).

It is for this reason that the Nietzsche scholar must be able to endure and affirm a high level of suffering, as Nietzsche has no inclination to be gentle in this process. He is well aware that it is “a main clause of the oldest (unhappily also the most enduring) psychology on earth” that “if something is to stay in memory it must be burned in” (GM, 2:3); as he writes in his discussion of suffering and pity in BGE:

In man, *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is matter, fragment, excess, clay, mud, madness, chaos; but in man there is also creator, sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divine spectator and the seventh day – do you understand this antithesis? And that *your* pity is for the ‘creature in man’, for that which has to be formed, broken, forged, torn, burned, annealed, refined – that which has to *suffer* and *should* suffer? (225)

As the image of the sculptor's hammer suggests, Nietzsche must rid his potential servants of a lot of excess stone before they can be made into something worthwhile, and this, it seems to me, is the real agenda behind his polemic against the scholarly type. By presenting different manifestations of the scholar in the most unflattering light, Nietzsche weeds out those among his readers who cannot accept the philosopher's superiority and with it their own relatively lower rank, while simultaneously appealing to those who can accept this rank ordering. As I have shown, Nietzsche does not criticize without reevaluating; in other words, he does not destroy without creating. His polemic directed at scholars, then, is his means of taking the hammer to those qualities which hinder the scholar's receptivity to his teaching, in order to reshape the scholar into the form he requires. This is necessary for the very good reason that the specific incarnations of the scholar which come under his attack are by no means equipped to deal with Nietzsche on his own terms; the limitations of the objective spirit, the skeptic, and the critic taken on their own render them incapable of withstanding the formative pressure of his thought.

In SE, Nietzsche takes note of two apparently contradictory maxims which were, in his time, applied to the education of the scholar. The first, he says,

demands that the educator should quickly recognize the real strength of his pupil and then direct all his efforts and energy and heat at them so as to help that one virtue to attain true maturity and fruitfulness. The other maxim, on the contrary, requires that the educator should draw forth and nourish *all* the forces which exist in his pupil and bring them to a harmonious relationship with one another. (2)

In his discussion of these two methods, the young Nietzsche argues that they are not, in fact, contradictory, but that the best route would be to apply both methods as one; as he writes, "perhaps the one simply says that man should have a center and the other that he should also have a periphery" (*ibid.*). In terms of the education of the free spirit, I have already indicated that the core or center of the free spirit's task lies in adapting himself ever more comprehensively to

Nietzsche's unifying perspective on life, that is, of taking Nietzsche's hierarchy of values as his dominant perspective and harmonizing all of his drives under this single rule. The problem of order of rank, in this sense, deals with the internal order of rank which governs the drives of the free spirit. However, this begs the question of the external order of rank, that is, of the free spirit's relationship to other scholars. Given the fact that the tasks of objectivity, skepticism, and criticism must come together in the free spirit as a single task, the nature of this relationship seems clear: the free spirit incorporates the work of other thinkers as alternative perspectives on life while remaining sufficiently free of their influence to bring criticism to bear on them, thus establishing the relative rank of each other scholar's perspective according to its value or disvalue for life. That is, the free spirit harmonizes the individual perspectives of other thinkers under the unifying perspective legislated by Nietzsche. In this sense, the task of the free spirit is, in part, to impose an order of rank upon lower-order scholars according to Nietzsche's standards. It is important, however, not to mistake this for the primary task of the free spirit; Nietzsche has provided the free spirit with a critical apparatus designed to allow him to diagnose the relative health or sickness of a given perspective, and it is by diagnosing other perspectives that the free spirit increases his understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy. This indicates that, in the self-education of the Nietzsche scholar, all other thinkers are peripheral to Nietzsche, whether we are speaking of thinkers in the history of philosophy or of the free spirit's contemporaries. In this sense, these scholars are the servants and instruments of the free spirit just as he is himself the servant and instrument of Nietzsche. The higher goal remains the attainment of an increasingly comprehensive understanding of Nietzsche's thought, thus the establishment of an order of rank among scholars is an inevitable by-product of his central task.

Because the free spirit must be “the judge and avenger of [his] own law” (Z, 1:17), it is, in the end, he himself who is alone capable of judging the success or failure of his self-experimentation. It is for this reason that Nietzsche warns his servants to “beware of martyrdom! Of suffering ‘for the sake of truth’! Even of defending yourselves!”; as he goes on to say:

After all, you know well enough that it cannot matter in the least whether precisely *you* are in the right, and that a more praiseworthy veracity may lie in every little question-mark placed after your favourite words and favourite theories (and occasionally after yourselves) than in all your solemn gesticulations and smart answers before courts and accusers! (BGE, 25)

Due to the fact, arising out of the nature of perspectivism, that all experiences are entirely unique to the individual, the free spirit must remain cognizant of the fact that any truth he puts forward is absolutely and irreducibly his own. To demand that others recognize his truth as ‘the’ truth – to demand external validation of what is uniquely his own – is a pointless and futile waste of energies, and betrays a vulgar desire to render his truths common. For this reason, despite the fact that Nietzsche views honesty (*Redlichkeit*) as the sole virtue remaining to the free spirit (BGE, 227), this honesty cannot be understood straightforwardly in the sense of telling the truth about oneself for the benefit of others’ enlightenment. Rather, it will bear a close relationship to the necessity of constant self-interrogation, in order to remain as honest with oneself as it is possible to be. Due to the intersection of self-interrogation and honesty, I will now turn, in my final two chapters, to an analysis of these two scholarly virtues. Chapter four, which deals with Daniel Conway’s essay entitled “*Parastrategesis*, Or: Rhetoric for Decadents,” will discuss the physiological basis for Nietzsche’s understanding of esotericism. Here, I will argue that Conway’s analysis overlooks the necessity of rigorous self-diagnosis, leading him to posit the impossibility of an esoteric reading of Nietzsche’s work. My fifth and final chapter will engage

with Alan White's genealogical reconstruction of the intellectual virtue known as honesty (*Redlichkeit*).

§4: The physiological foundations of Nietzsche's esoteric strategy.

The light of the furthest stars comes to man last; and before it has arrived man *denies* that there are – stars there. “How many centuries does a spirit need to be comprehended?” – that too is a standard, with that too is created an order of rank and etiquette such as is needed: for spirit and star.- (BGE, 285)

In his essay entitled “Parastrategesis, Or: Rhetoric for Decadents,” Daniel Conway investigates what he calls the “parastrategic dimension” of Nietzsche's thought, which is defined by Conway as “a rhetorical method [Nietzsche] develops in order to circumvent the deleterious formative influence of his own decadence” (181). For Conway, this facet of Nietzsche's thought “is neither fully strategic [*sic.*] nor purely accidental” (189), but is rather like a gravitational singularity (or ‘black hole’) – neither seen nor guessed at until one is close enough, or observant enough, to witness the effects of its gravitational pull on its surroundings. If, as Conway implies, Nietzsche was conscious of this ‘para-strategy,’ he passed over it in silence; however, given the nature of Nietzsche's published works, Conway's argument for a built-in “mechanism for self-overcoming” (189) is compelling. That being said, there are aspects of Conway's paper which are problematic, most significantly, his understanding of esotericism in Nietzsche's work. In the first half of my analysis, I will outline Conway's argument for the existence and function of the parastrategic dimension, and provide a critique of his argument based on Nietzsche's discussion of esotericism in *Beyond Good and Evil*. This will allow me to rearticulate the distinction

between Nietzsche's esoteric and exoteric strategies in terms of his growing emphasis on physiological evaluation. I will then go on to apply my findings to Conway's argument, drawing on Nietzsche's description of the scholarly and noble types in BGE. My intention in doing so is to interpret Conway's findings according to a more comprehensive perspective, and to redirect his conclusions away from the pessimism which pervades them. I will also touch on Laurence Lampert's account of esotericism which, though it discusses this topic in some detail, does not make the connection to physiology that I will argue is central to an understanding of Nietzsche's esoteric strategy.

The strength of Conway's argument rests on the consideration of two factors in Nietzsche's work: his reliance on an esoteric strategy, and his self-admitted status as "a child of [his] time; that is, a decadent" (CW, Pref.). As Conway writes,

in itself, Nietzsche's decadence should come as no surprise either to his faithful readers or to students of *fin de siècle* Western European culture. Indeed, we need not take his word for his condition. His writings from all periods of his career are rife with signs of his decadence: lapses into romanticism and resentment, delusions of grandeur, irrational appeals to race and power, fantasies of virile heroes and chivalrous warriors, an unquenchable thirst for revenge and redemption, an anachronistic reverence for "noble" ideals, and so on. (182)

Conway appeals to Nietzsche's treatment of Plato and Socrates as an indication of Nietzsche's self-reflexive rhetorical strategy: in identifying how Plato bequeathed the values of decadence to Western Europe through the teachings of the Platonic Socrates, Nietzsche came to fear a similar phenomenon in the dissemination of his own decadent teachings. This observation, for Conway, ties the question of Nietzsche's decadence firmly to that of his esotericism; as he writes, in Nietzsche's view "the secret teachings that Plato might have dispensed to his favourites, encrypted in the twisted dramatic forms of the aporetic dialogues, could *only* be teachings of decadence and decline" (180). Recognizing the danger to the future of the species should his

undiluted teachings gain sway over an already exhausted and fragmented culture, Nietzsche adopted his parastrategic rhetoric in an “attempt... to create the sort of readers who will detect, and correct for, his own complicity in the decadence of modernity” (Conway, 181). This, for Conway, explains the fragmented, obscure, and multi-layered style characteristic of Nietzsche’s published works, as well as “the strategic disclosure of his own decadence” (189).

The concept of parastrategesis is really quite simple. In essence, Nietzsche has furnished his readers with a critical apparatus designed to reveal the decadence at the heart of Western philosophy (religion, art, politics, etc.). Once the student of Nietzsche has gained sufficient insight into this diagnosis of Western culture from Plato to Schopenhauer, this student is then meant to turn this critical apparatus back on Nietzsche himself, spurred on by Nietzsche’s acknowledgment of his own decadence. As Conway writes, “the deployment of such devices both presupposes and produces the type of reader who will reject Nietzsche in the name of Nietzsche” (189), protecting the reader from mere discipleship through the formation of “an arena of dialectical contest” (190) – an *agon* in which the master himself may be overcome. This parastrategy is implied in BGE, where Nietzsche writes:

It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of the author and a kind of unconscious and involuntary memoir; moreover, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy have every time constituted the real germ of life out of which the entire plant has grown. To explain how a philosopher’s most remote metaphysical assertions have actually been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to ask oneself first: what morality does this (does *he* –) aim at? (6)

Although he does not come right out and say it (and leaving aside the fact that Nietzsche’s philosophy is very much a *conscious* and *voluntary* confession and memoir), the use of unconditional language in this passage clearly indicates that he intends this warning to apply to his own work as well as to the rest of Western philosophy. In this way, as Conway asserts,

“Nietzsche himself fashions the strategic anteroom, [while relying] on his readers to construct the parastrategic chamber that artificially expands the sphere of his rhetorical jurisdiction” (191). Thus the parastrategic reading is initiated by Nietzsche, and brought to completion by his various readers, “depending on the extent to which each can afford to subject Nietzsche to the sort of critical scrutiny that he reserves for his most hated foes” (191). To use a Zarathustrian formulation, “in a friend one should have one’s best enemy. You should be closest to him with your heart when you resist him” (Z, 1:14).

As I stated above, this aspect of Conway’s argument is highly compelling, a point which is unchanged by his failure to take into account Nietzsche’s own conception of esotericism in philosophy as formulated in BGE. It is, rather, the conclusions that he draws which are undermined by a close examination of Nietzsche’s esoteric strategy, which conclusions display, in my opinion, an unforgivable pessimism as regards the future of Nietzsche scholarship in particular, and of the human species as a whole. In his paper, Conway argues that, while Nietzsche’s pre-*Zarathustra* writings are marked by a specific esoteric strategy, his “besetting decadence” (183) forced him to abandon esotericism and “disseminate... his teachings indiscriminately to all readers” as “the champion *par excellence* of truth” (185). This early strategy is formulated as follows:

The distinguishing mark of rhetorical mastery is the strategic deployment of rhetorical devices in the service of larger political ends.... In order to achieve rhetorical mastery, teachers of esoteric wisdom must assume the double aspect of Janus, the divine patron of all gatekeepers and guardians of the truth. Each mask displayed by the rhetorical master functions as a selective portal, simultaneously granting admission to the elite *cognoscenti* while turning away the unwashed *hoi polloi*. (182-3)

For Conway, however, Nietzsche’s “eleventh-hour embrace of the truth” (185) indicates his growing realization that

any audience that falls within the dwindling sphere of his rhetorical mastery would be too impotent to fulfill his political agenda, and any readership capable of furthering his ends would also be strong enough to distort his teachings beyond recognition. [Thus] he must either trust his diminished rhetorical strategies, or discard (some of) his masks and expose his teachings to an unworthy audience. In either case the risk is virtually prohibitive: on the one hand, he may fail to dispense his secret teachings; on the other hand, he may inadvertently bequeath them to vulgarians. (184)

It is because of this abandonment of esotericism, Conway argues, that Nietzsche takes up the notion of parastrategesis as already discussed. Unable to continue on an obscure path doomed, ultimately, to fail, Nietzsche takes the risk of showing his cards while hoping that his 'elite' readers will be clever enough to catch on to the fact that they cannot, and should not, take him at face value. Rather, they must use his own rhetoric against him in order to complete his political agenda. As the story goes, this attempt has failed; Conway asserts that

Nietzsche's recourse to parastrategesis presupposes... that he can successfully insulate his "ideal" readers from the formative influence of his decadence. But he cannot. Indeed, the "ideal" readers for whom he longs, the warrior-genealogists who prove themselves his equals in the arena of manly conquest, are the products of a decadent fantasy. His *real* readers, those nook-dwelling creatures of *ressentiment* who inherit the curse of his decadence, fashion the parastrategic dimension into a torture chamber of revenge and betrayal.... Casting a wide net for the sort of reader who might complete his work, he lands all sorts of odd fish whom he would surely throw back were he able. (192-3, 195)

I will argue that this reading of Nietzsche's task would benefit from a consideration of his growing reliance on a physiological perspective. In this light, Nietzsche's turn towards truthfulness in his later writings stems not from a growing fear that his teachings will be lost or corrupted, but from a realization that he no longer needs to 'safeguard' his message in quite the same manner as was deemed necessary with his earlier writings.

The nature of esotericism as Nietzsche understands it – that is, as depending on the physiological constitution of the reader – gives him leave to expand on themes that, prior to this

understanding, he had thought it politic to disguise. This is in line with Nietzsche's comments in BGE, which do not reduce esotericism to mere rhetoric. As he writes:

Our supreme insights must – and should! – sound like follies, in certain cases like crimes, when they come impermissibly to the ears of those who are not predisposed and predestined for them. The exoteric and esoteric as philosophers formerly distinguished them... wherever one believed in an order of rank and *not* in equality and equal rights – differ one from another not so much in that the exoteric stands outside and sees, evaluates, measures, judges from the outside, not from the inside: what is more essential is that this class sees things from below – but the esoteric sees them *from above*! (30)

In his commentary, Lampert first points out that Nietzsche knew that “the philosopher is ineradicably different, an exception among exceptions whose essential experience is incommunicable” (71), and as a result of this general incomprehensibility, “the genuine philosopher would be ridiculed as mad or persecuted as criminal if he stated his views openly” (72). Because the vast majority of his audience is not capable of doing him justice, esotericism is unavoidable for a thinker of Nietzsche's calibre; even if he wished to make his views known to all, there are too many barriers to communication to make such a wish practicable. Lampert elaborates further on this theme by pointing out that

the customary understanding suggests that to enter the esoteric all that is needed is permission or instruction and one can walk on in. Nietzsche's correction suggests that the esoteric view is unattainable or inaccessible to anyone who is not the kind for it: no one can be carried to the view from the height. (73)

In this light, Nietzsche's esoteric strategy can be seen primarily as an appeal to experience, rather than as a desperate and futile attempt to convince unexceptional men that exceptional action is required. One must first be *capable* of understanding him, which capability presupposes more than a passing familiarity with the values and experiences that Nietzsche describes. As he writes:

What a philosopher is, is hard to learn, because it cannot be taught: one has to ‘know’ it from experience.... There exists an order of rank of states of soul with which the order of rank of problems accords; and the supreme problems repel

without mercy everyone who ventures near them without being, through the elevation and power of his spirituality, predestined to their solution. (BGE, 213)

This ‘predestination’ is formulated by Zarathustra thus: “Whoever is of my kind will also encounter the experiences of my kind” (3:8); rather than an appeal to external forces (such as Fate, e.g.), a man’s pre-destiny is written into the very syntax of his body, and represents a hierarchy or articulation of the drives that is akin to Zarathustra’s (or Nietzsche’s) own. In other words, it presupposes a similar stance with respect to life, designated by Nietzsche the ‘affirmative’ or ‘ascendant’ orientation, which is based on an organic predisposition towards the values of ascending life. Upon encountering Nietzsche’s work, such readers would echo Emerson’s sentiment with regards to Montaigne: “It seemed to me as if I myself had written the book, in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thought and experience” (quoted in Parkes, 4). In short, this is the (originally) Platonic concept of *anamnesis* reinscribed in the realm of organic memory. Thus, by way of reply to Conway’s allegations of Nietzsche’s “diminished rhetorical mastery” (189), I will argue that any and all ‘rhetoric’ in Nietzsche’s works is necessarily exoteric. His adoption of a rigorously physiological standpoint indicates that his ideal readers do not *need* to be ‘persuaded’ of the truthfulness of his vision, but will always already understand – “and then *necessarily* understand” (A, Foreword) – this truth in themselves.

This interpretation allows us to circumvent the quandary that Conway believes Nietzsche faced: if esotericism has a physiological basis, it becomes impossible for Nietzsche to “inadvertently bequeath [his secret teachings] to vulgarians” (Conway, 184). The exoteric readers will not, and cannot, gain access to the core of Nietzsche’s thought; as Zarathustra says to the “foaming fool” who warns him away from the decadent city, “your fool’s words injure me, even where you are right. And even if Zarathustra’s words *were* a thousand times right, still *you*

would always *do* wrong with my words” (3:7). Nietzsche pronounces his judgment on such ‘apes’¹⁴ of his ideal accordingly: “He who does not *want* to see what is elevated in a man looks all the more keenly for what is low and foreground in him – and thereby gives himself away” (BGE, 275). Thus Conway’s failure to take these points into account, while judging some of Nietzsche’s most important themes as whimsical (or criminal) “products of a decadent fantasy” (193), reveals that he remains on the level of an exoteric reader by Nietzsche’s own standards.

Keeping the above points in mind, what are we to make of Nietzsche’s specifically exoteric strategy? Retaining Conway’s definition of this strategy as an attempt to “persuade... exoteric readers of the wisdom and justice of his or her political vision... in order to serve his or her covert political ends” (183), how is it that these lower-order readers actually accomplish these ends? Here we need to distinguish between (at least) two levels of exoteric readers: broadly speaking, there are those who reject Nietzsche outright as a madman who ought to be consigned to the trash-bin of history,¹⁵ and those who fall (voluntarily or involuntarily) into his trap, spending their lives tapping away at the walls of his labyrinth without possessing the ability either to navigate it as their own rightful territory or to extricate themselves from it entirely. In Conway’s words, these latter are those “odd fish whom [Nietzsche] would surely throw back” (195), consisting of “Christians, liberals, feminists, postmodernists, anti-Semites, democrats, anarchists, and virtually every other community or cult that he expressly condemned” (184). Assuming that Nietzsche recognized that his work would fall into the hands of such readers, how could he have hoped to persuade them of the ‘wisdom and justice’ of a teaching that advocates cruelty, oppression, exploitation, contempt for all that is weak, and every other form of seeming

¹⁴ The “foaming fool” is referred to by the people of the decadent city as “Zarathustra’s ape” (Z, 3:7).

¹⁵ Geoff Waite (author of *Nietzsche’s Corps/e*), for example, who writes “from the perspective of Nietzsche’s genuine enemy, the democratic Enlightenment” and “who believes in no devils but Nietzsche” (Lampert, 75n.20).

injustice from the point of view of modern culture? What, exactly, are the ‘political ends’ that these readers are meant to further?

Conway’s answer to this question does not look beyond the fall of Christianity; as he writes:

Owing to his decadence... [Nietzsche’s] depleted strategic resources are not sufficient to ensure the success of his campaign against Christian morality. In order for Nietzsche to be born posthumously as the Antichrist, he will require the assistance of readers who can extend his influence into the next millennium, at which time his ‘untimely’ teachings might descend upon receptive ears. (187)

This reading casts Nietzsche’s exotericism as a kind of parasitism, a strategy which allows him to ‘infect’ the Western world with his teachings in order to ensure that they survive long enough to be transmitted to those strong enough to withstand their influence. Given the history of Nietzsche’s impact on Western philosophy thus far, this reading seems to be justified. However, in limiting the function of Nietzsche’s exoteric strategy to a mechanism of self-preservation, Conway misses the truly radical political function of his works. This function is indicated in BGE, where Nietzsche writes that

What serves the higher type of man as food or refreshment must to a very different and inferior type be almost poison.... There are books which possess an opposite value for soul and health depending on whether the lower soul, the lower vitality, or the higher and more powerful avails itself of them: in the former case they are dangerous, disintegrative books, which produces dissolution, in the latter they are herald calls challenging the most courageous to *their* courage. (30)

In this light, it appears that the ‘parasitism’ of Nietzsche’s exoteric strategy is not intended merely to preserve his teachings for those worthy of them, but is designed to *accelerate* the decadence of his lower-order readers and, through them, the decadence of Western culture as a whole. In terms of the two levels of exoteric readers that I identified earlier, the former (those who reject Nietzsche outright) are those who are already sunk so far into decadence that there is

no need to push them further over the edge, while the latter serve the function of disseminating the disease of nihilism among an ever-widening sphere of readers. These readers are those strong enough to accept certain aspects of Nietzsche's thought without being able to swallow him whole, forcing them to attempt a reconciliation of Nietzsche's thought with, for example, Christianity, liberal democracy, anarchy, etc., and thus further infecting precisely those factions that Nietzsche wished to eradicate.

What Conway misses is the fact that Nietzsche's exoteric readers cannot fulfill his political agenda *otherwise than by dying*, and dying quickly. Given Nietzsche's conception of society as an organism which obeys the laws of physiology,¹⁶ the fall of Christianity and the onset of nihilism is inevitable¹⁷; the poison has been spreading for so long that a reversal of the damage is impossible. The true danger is that this degeneration will be so drawn-out that the possibility of new philosophers and free spirits arising to harness humanity towards a new goal will vanish, leaving us with no alternative to the 'last man' and the end of history. Conway's assertion that Nietzsche would 'throw back' these unwanted fish imputes a level of humanitarianism that Nietzsche has little use for; in seeking out fellow "amphibians" (WP,

¹⁶ Cf. BGE 259, where he describes the aristocracy as "that body within which... individuals treat one another as equals... [which] must, if it is a living and not a decaying body, itself do all that to other bodies which the individuals within it refrain from doing to one another: it will have to be the will to power incarnate... not out of any morality or immorality, but because it *lives*, and because life *is* will to power."

¹⁷ Cf. WP 1:2: "The end of Christianity – at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God (the sense of truthfulness, developed highly by Christianity, is nauseated by the falseness and mendaciousness of all Christian interpretations of the world and of history; rebound from 'God is truth' to the fanatical faith 'All is false'...)"

617)¹⁸ who can endure the transition from water to air, he is unconcerned about the fate of those left on the shore to suffocate.

Despite the nature of my criticisms of Conway's article, my intention here has not been to undermine his position, but rather to supplement it. In my introduction, I alluded to a certain short-sightedness and pessimism within his work; in my reading of Conway, these two qualities are inextricably linked to one another. In essence, what he has argued is that Nietzsche predicted the rise of a certain, noble type of reader, and that this type has not appeared. This indicates, to Conway, that Nietzsche is incapable of creating such a readership: because only decadents have read him thus far, it follows that Nietzsche can only appeal to decadents.¹⁹ If, by chance, such a reader were to appear, he would either succumb to the influence of Nietzsche's decadence, or twist Nietzsche's work out of all recognition; as Conway writes,

indeed, the more successful [Nietzsche] is in persuading his readers to contribute to his parastrategesis, the further they will stray from his influence – and the greater the chance that they will distort or profane his teaching.... He yearned for disciples who might tear him to shreds in a pique of maenadic possession, but he instead attracts treacherous followers who will betray him and distort his teachings to suit their own designs. (193, 197)

¹⁸ This section of *The Will to Power* is a brief outline of what was clearly intended to be a much longer section (or possibly an entire book); the line quoted reads "The destruction of ideals, the new desert; new arts by means of which we can endure it, we amphibians" (WP, 617).

¹⁹ "Nietzsche's decadence is thus responsible for the crowning irony of his life and career: it is only as a decadent, as a 'man of *ressentiment*,' that he commands anything like the rhetorical mastery he regularly claims for himself. Had he somehow succeeded in creating the audience he desired, his anti-Christian rebellion surely would have foundered. It is only insofar as he has *failed* to control his readership, attracting readers whom he summarily disowns, that his political agenda remains viable at all. He envisioned a vanguard of warrior-genealogists whom he would personally train in the manly arts of martial contest, but his actual readers are creatures of *ressentiment*, versed in the 'effeminate' arts of subterfuge, duplicity, and deception.... His readership is not what he hoped for, given his romantic fantasies of a heraldic guild, but it accurately reflects his decadent condition" (Conway, 197). While I am taking issue with this point, in some respects it agrees with my own analysis; if we are only looking at Nietzsche on the level of rhetorical mastery, then we are necessarily dealing with an exoteric strategy which will always fail to cultivate an esoteric readership.

Given the fact that Nietzsche scholarship is still in a relatively early stage of development (as compared, say, to Plato scholarship), I will argue that this conclusion is premature, and that a more comprehensive perspective is possible. As with everything young, Nietzsche scholarship, one of “the last and latest developments” of the Western philosophical tradition, is “also what is most unfinished and unstrong” (GS, 11);²⁰ assuming the organic metaphor applies in this case, a little over a century is hardly enough time for Nietzsche’s work to have drawn its ultimate consequences. Nietzsche himself acknowledged this point: as Lampert relates,

when he sent a copy of *Beyond Good and Evil* to his high-minded and earnest old friend Malwida von Maysenbug, Nietzsche asked her not to read it and even less to express to him her feelings about it: ‘Let’s assume that people *may* be able to read it around the year 2000.’ Only the turn of a new millennium would make Nietzsche’s book approachable.... [BGE] is timely, written for the near future, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a time of nihilism consequent on the death of God. It points its reader to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a book that is untimely, written to help create the future far beyond that nihilism. (301)

In short, while we have no grounds upon which to prove that Nietzsche’s project will be a success in the future, we are likewise in no position to judge that it has already failed.

For Conway, Nietzsche’s motives for his experiment with parastrategesis are bound up with his need for his readers to resist discipleship. As he writes:

For those readers who idolize Nietzsche and cannot afford to subject him to his own critical insights, the parastrategic dimension will remain unexplored and undeveloped. For other readers, the parastrategic dimension will extend outward, but not so far as to jeopardize the project of rehabilitating Nietzsche or of locating in his thought a precursor of their own. These two types of scholar will honor his claim to rhetorical mastery, but they will lack the critical skills needed to resist the thrall of Nietzschean discipleship. (191)

²⁰ This line from *The Gay Science* refers to the development of consciousness as an organic process.

A reader familiar with *Zarathustra* will note the legitimacy of the claim that Nietzsche could not put his hopes in disciples,²¹ but I would like to draw a distinction between blindly idolizing Nietzsche on the one hand, and having reverence for his work on the other. The former represents a slavish and even dogmatic devotion to the master which Conway does well to criticize, while the latter is, in Nietzsche's own words, the sign of a noble taste and thus a fitting attribute of a servant of rank. By way of reply to Conway's conviction that a noble reader of this type is a figment of Nietzsche's imagination, I propose to draw on Nietzsche's description of the noble type in BGE in order to demonstrate that Conway has missed a crucial step in his articulation of parastrategesis, one that leaves room for the possibility of an esoteric reading of Nietzsche.

In the ninth and final chapter of BGE, Nietzsche devotes nearly forty sections to an articulation of the characteristics of the noble type. As Lampert points out,

it seems an impertinence for anyone other than Nietzsche to speak about Nietzsche's thoughts on nobility, for here more than elsewhere his subject was himself and his own experiences, and here more than anywhere else good taste and cleanliness dictated that he write obliquely, trusting to the preceding chapters to certify his right to speak of the ladder of rank from its top rung. Yet Nietzsche apparently judged that such seeming impertinence – talk of philosophers' experience by nonphilosophers – is both necessary and desirable, for he forced his readers to confront experiences that could never be their own. But in the playfully riddling aphorisms that convey something of that experience, Nietzsche appeals for courtesy, the courtesy generated by a reverence that knows there are things that are not to be touched, even if they are to be viewed. (263)

While Lampert's tact on this point is commendable, the nature of Nietzsche's work as an appeal to experience indicates that he believed in the emergence of readers for whom the experience of nobility is not foreign. Lampert acknowledges this point when he writes, "aiming to forge a new

²¹ Cf. Z, 1:22, 2:1, 2:22, and 3:1. Zarathustra leaves his disciples at the end of the first book only to return to them at the opening of the second; when he leaves them again at the end of book two it is with the resolution not to return to them as their teacher.

nobility, [Nietzsche] employs the charm of the dangerous and different, writing like a pied piper for souls naturally predisposed to the noble” (272). In making this point, I am not conflating the noble type with the philosopher (who represents, for Nietzsche, the pinnacle of human achievement), but asserting that the noble scholar is of a lower rank of nobility than the philosopher, and that there is no dishonour in striving to become a fitting tool in the philosopher’s hands. Rather, this willingness to devote one’s life to the service of a thinker is the highest act of evaluation possible for a scholar; it is a deeming-worthy, it is to say ‘here is something worth dedicating my life, my time, and my energy to.’²² For Nietzsche, this is almost the definition of reverence: the recognition of experiences higher than one’s own, and of one’s rank relative to the higher. As he writes:

The refinement, goodness and loftiness of a soul is put to a perilous test whenever something passes before it that is of the first rank but not yet protected from importunate clumsiness and claws by the awe of authority: something that goes its way unsignalized, undiscovered, tempting, perhaps arbitrarily obscured and disguised, like a living touchstone. He whose task and practice it is to explore the soul will avail himself of precisely this art in many forms in order to determine the ultimate value of a soul, the unalterable innate order of rank to which it belongs: he will test it for its *instinct of reverence*. (BGE, 263)

For Lampert, BGE is itself such a ‘test’: “this fishhook of a book... is in part an exercise in the art of ‘searching out souls’ by testing for an ‘instinct of reverence’ for something truly worthy yet identified so easily as demonic” (273). This ‘test’ for the instinct of reverence has a peculiar link to the scholarly type through what Nietzsche calls the ‘historical sense.’ This is defined as

the capacity for divining quickly the order of rank of the evaluations according to which a people, a society, a human being has lived, the ‘divinatory instinct’ for the relationships of these evaluations, for the relation of the authority of values to the authority of effective forces. (BGE, 224)

²² As with everything in Nietzsche, the ultimate value of this evaluation depends on the evaluator, and so this point could cut both ways: a deeming-worthy does not necessarily indicate worthiness or nobility in the individual.

This ‘sense,’ one of the scholarly virtues,²³ can under the right circumstances be an indication of a noble taste; though he refers to the historical sense as “ignoble” in this section (BGE, 224), he re-articulates it in different words in his chapter on nobility: “there is an *instinct for rank* which is more than anything else already the sign of a high rank; there is a *delight* in the nuances of reverence, which reveals a noble origin and noble habits” (263). The possession of this sense thus enables an instinctive self-recognition on the part of those who always already identify with a noble taste, but who, having been “thrown into a noisy and plebeian age” (BGE, 282), have had no means of identifying this taste for what it is. In this way, the structure of “What is Noble?” allows the reader in possession of the historical sense to determine his own rank with respect to Nietzsche (and to the philosophical type in general): in moving from the social aristocracy to the aristocratic individual, and finally up to the philosopher himself,²⁴ this chapter brings the careful reader step-by-step up the ladder of rank. As I noted earlier, this is by no means an attempt to convince every reader that nobility is a desirable state and therefore something to aspire to; this is an exegesis of a physiological orientation assumed to be always already present, if only in nascent form, within a certain type of reader. As Nietzsche writes, “it is the *faith* which is decisive here, which determines the order of rank here... some fundamental certainty which a noble soul possesses in regard to itself, something which may not be sought or found and perhaps may not be lost either. – *The noble soul has reverence for itself.*–” (BGE, 287).

²³ The section detailing the historical sense is found in the chapter immediately following that on “We Scholars,” which is entitled “Our Virtues.”

²⁴ Cf. Lampert’s divisions of this chapter, p.262.

This reverence towards the self is synonymous with the healthy egoism that Nietzsche argues is characteristic of the higher type,²⁵ and he provides a further description of this egoism as follows:

Everything [the noble type] knows to be a part of himself, he honours: such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground stands the feeling of plenitude, of power which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth which would like to give away and bestow.... The noble human being honours in himself the man of power, also the man who has power over himself, who understands how to speak and how to keep silent, who enjoys practicing severity and harshness upon himself and feels reverence for all that is severe and harsh. (260)

In seeking out those who instinctively desire and honour the path of most resistance as a means to self-enhancement, Nietzsche's philosophy invites such a reader onto the hardest path – Nietzsche being a merciless taskmaster – by forcing the reader to apply Nietzsche's critical apparatus primarily and consistently to himself. Thus, in arguing that Nietzsche's esotericism operates through an anamnestic 'gut reaction' to his work, I am not implying that the esoteric reader happens across Nietzsche's work and gains a transparent understanding of it 'in one fell swoop.' The initial reaction to Nietzsche is precisely that – a *beginning*, an unconscious and instinctive response that takes the form of a suspicion that *this* philosopher articulates one's own perspective better than anything else one has come across. It presupposes a long process of trying out different perspectives, a process which stems from a sense of homelessness or alienation from one's own time that drives one through a wide range of religious, literary, scientific and philosophical interpretations in search of something that 'just makes sense' on a fundamental level. It is Nietzsche's conviction that, as the decadence of modern 'culture' comes to be felt more and more clearly as "a state of distress" (BGE, Pref.), this sense of homelessness

²⁵ Cf. Z 3:10, in which selfishness is the third traditional evil that Zarathustra weighs anew and finds good.

will itself become more widespread, and more and more ‘children of modern times’ will be drawn to his message, dissatisfied with traditional interpretations.

Once the initial connection has been established, the task of a reader so ‘hooked’ becomes one of rigorous self-diagnosis, and this brings us back to Conway and *parastrategesis*. In the end, I agree with his argument that the esoteric reader has a duty to diagnose Nietzsche by his own criteria, and that this diagnosis will inevitably entail a revaluation of Nietzsche’s project. If, as Nietzsche believed, philosophers of a new type are to arise, they will have to perform this revaluation; that is the very essence of the philosopher’s task, according to Nietzsche, and he would indeed be a traitor to his own cause if he could not permit his readers to be as critical of himself as he requires them to be of others. However, the conclusion that this point was either unacknowledged by, or disturbing to, Nietzsche is unconvincing, as is the contention that any such reader would necessarily partake of Nietzsche’s own decadence. As Conway is quick to note, Nietzsche was well aware of his own status as a decadent, and the complexity and obscurity of his published works betray a desire to keep the most explosive aspects of his work out of the hands of irresponsible disciples. In this way, the exoteric function of his work serves to excise decaying factions of society – in medical terms, to euthanize the incurable – while preserving his work for those who, like him, experience themselves as fundamentally different from their own time.

Thus the experiment in *parastrategesis*, rather than a desperate gamble by a thinker in despair, further confirms Nietzsche’s faith that readers would emerge who are capable of using the critical apparatus he provided in order to diagnose themselves. In emphasizing the physiological nature of Nietzsche’s esotericism and the necessity of self-diagnosis, I have extended the bounds of Conway’s parastrategic dimension in order to take into account a crucial

step that his argument overlooks: the reader must know where he stands before he can begin to diagnose Nietzsche; he must first live up to the master before attempting to overcome him, and make this attempt only on the condition that he evaluates from a perspective of health. Likewise, this dimension extends to his relations with other scholars: he must be decisive concerning the rank of whatever he reads and self-critical enough not to wilfully misread others; he must be his own experiment, unwilling to be more severe on others than he is on himself, and he must demand the same severity in return. All of this is necessary, not out of a merely cerebral dedication to ‘intellectual integrity,’ but because the noble type *represents* integrity itself, integrity incarnate, and will have it no other way. In its esoteric function, Nietzsche’s philosophy is to be *lived*.

§5: A Genealogy of *Redlichkeit*

In his essay entitled “The Youngest Virtue,” Alan White investigates the meaning of the virtue known to Nietzsche as *Redlichkeit*. As early as the writing of *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* we can arguably see this virtue at work in nascent form, while by *Daybreak*, *Redlichkeit* was one of Nietzsche’s “four cardinal virtues” (556). Nietzsche tells us, earlier in that same work, that *Redlichkeit*

is among neither the Socratic nor the Christian virtues: it is the youngest virtue, still very immature, still often misjudged and taken for something else, still hardly aware of itself, something in process of becoming which we can advance or obstruct as we think fit. (456)

In GS, we are told that those of us who “want to become... human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves” cannot dispense with physics,

nor with “that which *compels* us to turn to physics – our *Redlichkeit!*” (335), and by the writing of BGE *Redlichkeit* has become the only virtue left to the free spirit (227). As White writes:

These references lead me to the confident conclusion that *Redlichkeit* is something whose value Nietzsche thinks at least some of us should recognize; but they also lead me to a question: What does this *Redlichkeit* involve? In response, most (and perhaps all) English translations of Nietzsche suggest an apparently simple response: To be *redlich* is to be honest. But this serves only to complicate the question: Is being honest indeed the same thing as being *redlich*? And even if it is, what is involved in being honest? (63)

Accordingly, White’s strategy is to discover what *Redlichkeit* means for Nietzsche by tracing its etymological and historical development – its genealogy – as sketched by Nietzsche in GS 110, “*Origin of knowledge [Erkenntnis]*,” and 111, “*Origin of the logical*”. In what follows, I will outline White’s argument in support of the claim that ‘honesty’ is an inadequate translation of *Redlichkeit*, and engage in an extensive critique of his genealogical reconstruction. I will argue that White’s analysis displays insufficient sensitivity to the dynamics of will to power as manifest in the development of *Redlichkeit*, which causes him to lose sight of the full significance of this important scholarly virtue.

White begins his analysis with an etymological account of *Redlichkeit*, pointing out that, while this term is often translated as honesty, so too are such terms as *Ehrlichkeit*, *Rechtschaffenheit*, *Anständigkeit* and *Probität*. As he writes:

“*Ehrlichkeit*,” like “honesty,” derives from a root suggesting what is honorable or respectable. “*Rechtschaffenheit*,” like “rectitude,” is linked to what is straight or upright, “*Anständigkeit*,” like “upstanding,” refers back to what stands erect; and both “*Probität*” and “probity” derive from terms denoting general goodness or serviceability. “*Redlichkeit*,” however – unlike any correspondent term in English – derives from a root suggesting speaking or talking (*reden*) and, although less apparently to the modern speaker of German, counting or calculating (*rechnen*). (63)

In the same passage of Z wherein the protagonist speaks of “that youngest among the virtues, which is called ‘*Redlichkeit*’” (1:13), Nietzsche emphasizes the link between *reden* and *Redlichkeit*. As he writes:

Verily, all being is hard to prove and hard to induce to speak [*schwer zum Reden zu bringen*].... Indeed, this ego [*Ich*] and the ego’s contradiction and confusion still speak most honestly of its being [*redet noch am redlichsten von seinem Sein*] – this creating, willing, valuing ego, which is the measure and value of things. And this most honest [*redlichste*] being, the ego, speaks [*redet*] of the body and still wants the body, even when it poetizes [*dichtet*] and raves [*schwärmt*] and flutters with broken wings. It learns to speak ever more honestly [*Immer redlicher lernt es reden*], this ego: and the more it learns, the more words and honors it finds for body and earth.... Listen... my brothers, to the voice of the healthy body: that is a more honest and purer [*redlichere und reinere*] voice. Most honestly and purely speaks [*Redlicher redet und reiner*] the healthy body that is perfect and perpendicular: and it speaks [*redet*] of the meaning of the earth. (1:3)

Given the conjunction of these terms in this passage, White concludes that Nietzsche’s choice of *Redlichkeit* over “various near-synonyms that... he could equally well have appropriated” indicates that “its rootedness in *reden*” (72) is a key reason for this choice. In this light, it could be concluded that what Nietzsche means by *Redlichkeit* is honesty in the sense of speaking the truth; as White writes, “one way of being both ‘*redlich*’ and ‘honest’ is being ‘truthful’ in the sense of telling the truth, and, as is appropriate to the German term’s root, telling the truth is one way of speaking or talking” (64). For White, however, the ease of this conclusion explains why many of Nietzsche’s most “careful and sensitive commentators have either assumed or concluded that what Nietzsche means by *Redlichkeit* is honesty in the sense of telling the truth, being truthful, or being motivated by the will to truth” (64), and serves to divert them from examining Nietzsche’s use of this term. Given the presence in Nietzsche’s corpus of references to *Redlichkeit* which link it to such characteristics as “being obliging in an indirect way” (GS, 329), the free spirit’s “devilry” (BGE, 227), and the cynicism of common souls (BGE, 26), all of

which are at odds with what one would normally associate with truthfulness, White concludes that “we will not get at *Redlichkeit*... by reflecting on honesty” (66).

In order to get to the heart of what *Redlichkeit* is, White argues that we have to look at “how it has become – that is, to retrace the steps in its becoming” (66). Before moving on to White’s reconstruction of the history of this development, however, we will need to address a terminological issue which, I will argue, causes White to lose sight of a key feature of Nietzsche’s argument, namely order of rank. This concerns White’s use of the phrase ‘will to life’: his reconstruction centers on Nietzsche’s account of the battle between two opposing wills (or drives, instincts, etc.) which White refers to as ‘the will to life’ and ‘the will to truth.’ This is consistent with Nietzsche’s terminology in GS 110; while he does not, at least in Kaufmann’s translation, use the phrase ‘will to life,’ he does speak throughout this section of the conflict between “life and knowledge [*Erkenntnis*]” or life and “the impulse for truth” (GS, 110). I will argue that the phrase ‘will to life’ can be misleading insofar as it does not differentiate between the will to preserve life and the will to enhance life, a point which is going to become significant towards the end of White’s genealogy. For this reason, I will refer to the ‘instinct of self-preservation’ in place of the ‘will to life’ as being more consistent with Nietzsche’s actual meaning. Thus, when Nietzsche speaks of the basic errors which “proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species” (*ibid.*) he is claiming that these errors are fictions specific to the drive to self-preservation; it is these fictions in particular which find themselves challenged by the will to truth. The way in which this relates to order of rank will be drawn out as my discussion of White’s reconstruction progresses.

Nietzsche’s account of the development of *Redlichkeit* begins long before *Redlichkeit* itself steps on the scene, with the incorporation of the aforementioned set of “basic errors.”

These are “that there are enduring things; that there are equal things; that there are things, substances, bodies; that a thing is what it appears to be; that our will is free; that what is good for me is also good in itself” (*ibid.*). Nietzsche is clear, both in this section and the one following, that these errors are essential to the preservation of the human animal; as he writes:

Innumerable beings who made inferences in a way different from ours perished; for all that, their ways might have been truer. Those, for example, who did not know how to find often enough what is “equal” as regards both nourishment and hostile animals – those, in other words, who subsumed things too slowly and cautiously – were favored with a lesser probability of survival than those who guessed immediately upon encountering similar instances that they must be equal. (GS, 111)

In this way, these “life-preserving conclusions – although certainly not ‘true’ in [Nietzsche’s] strictest sense – were calcified into accepted propositions, into articles of faith” (White, 67). These conclusions are errors in the sense that they “originate... through our equating what is unequal ...through an arbitrary abstraction from... individual differences, through forgetting the distinctions” (TL, 1). Other ways of inferring “might have been ‘truer’ in being more precisely accurate, that is, more cognizant of differences between items our ancestors (perhaps thoughtlessly) lumped together” (White, 66); the point, for Nietzsche, is that when it comes to self-preservation untruth is of higher value than truth.²⁶ As he writes: “The *strength* of knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] does not depend on its degree of truth but on its age, on the degree to which it has been incorporated, on its character as a condition of life” (GS, 110). White is going to refer to the stronger and weaker forms of *Erkenntnis* as ‘successful acquaintance’ and ‘precise accuracy’ respectively (67). As he writes:

²⁶ “Our fundamental tendency is to assert that the falsest judgments... are the most indispensable to us, that without granting as true the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a continual falsification of the world by means of numbers, mankind could not live” (BGE, 4).

Successful acquaintance fosters the assumption that all blueberries are equal, and all are safe – whereas all Deadly Nightshade berries are equal, and all are deadly. No doubt, the gourmet will notice that some blueberries are sweeter than others, and the artist, that the fruits come in a pleasing variety of sizes and colors. Yet insistence that such differences be carefully noted – insistence that one should strive for truth – is so much weaker than grouping by kind that reliance upon it would prove fatal. It is weaker not because it is less exact than successful acquaintance; on the contrary, it is more exact in the sense that it acknowledges more fully the specific features of whatever it may happen to encounter. Its impotence results not from any inaccuracy, but from the fact that it has not been – and cannot be – incorporated [*einverleibt*]. (67)

The life-preserving errors, as “the primeval impulses and basic errors of all sentient existence” (GS, 110), were incorporated so thoroughly that they came to appear self-evident; as Nietzsche writes, “wherever life [self-preservation] and knowledge seemed to be at odds there was never any real fight, but denial and doubt were simply considered madness” (*ibid.*). In this manner, successful acquaintance prevailed within the human animal throughout the greater part of its development.

Late in this development, however, “deniers and doubters” (White, 67) arose who challenged the basic errors for the first time. These “exceptional thinkers” (GS, 110), exemplified in Nietzsche’s view by the Eleatics, “posited and clung to the opposites of the natural errors”; this represents the emergence of the will to truth “as the weakest form of knowledge” (*ibid.*). In White’s terminology, successful acquaintance was challenged by precise accuracy: the precise cognition of the Eleatics “accurately unmasked numerous common articles of faith as ‘natural errors’” (White, 67-8), despite the fact that “our organism was prepared for the opposite; all its higher functions, sense perception and every kind of sensation worked with those basic errors which had been incorporated since time immemorial” (GS, 110). However, in order to maintain the “faith that their knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] was also the principle of *life*” (*ibid.*) – that is, in order to maintain the belief that their truth was capable of being incorporated –

the Eleatics “succeeded only in reversing the error they had opposed” (White, 68). In Nietzsche’s words:

They invented the sage as the man who was unchangeable and impersonal, the man of the universality of intuition who was One and All at the same time, with a special capacity for his inverted knowledge.... But in order to claim all of this, they had to *deceive* themselves about their own state: they had to attribute to themselves, fictitiously, impersonality and changeless duration; they had to misapprehend the nature of the knower; they had to deny the role of the impulses in knowledge; and quite generally they had to conceive of reason as a completely free and spontaneous activity. (GS, 110)

In this sense, the Eleatics merely replaced one self-deception with another; their convictions remained bound to the fictions proper to the instinct of self-preservation, which posits durability and thinghood – stability – either on the side of the object or that of the subject (or both) with equal efficacy. In White’s words, the Eleatics “were forced to commit the very error they were among the first to have exposed: In unmasking apparent contradictions in the belief that there are multiple and changing things, they masked the fact that their own intellects had to be both multiple and changing” (68).

It is with the critics of the Eleatic position that *Redlichkeit* begins to emerge: as Nietzsche writes, “the subtler development of *Redlichkeit* and skepticism made [the Eleatics], too, impossible; their ways of living and judging were seen to be also dependent upon the primeval impulses and basic errors of all sentient existence” (GS, 110). White tells us that

in one sense, skeptical *Redlichkeit* moved a step beyond the Eleatic position: It recognized that human beings relied on the belief that there are equal beings. Yet in moving beyond the Eleatics, the critics failed to raise the deepest question posed by the Eleatics’ failure: What is the relationship between the [instinct of self-preservation]... and the will to truth, or the demand for successful acquaintance and the demand for precise accuracy? (69)

Nietzsche’s answer to this question is clear: truth is deadly, not, as White suggests, merely because precise accuracy is “weaker” (67) than successful acquaintance (though in the earliest

stages of development this must have been the case), but because the will to truth is antithetical to the basic tendency of the instinct of self-preservation. This drive, as we have seen, is responsible for imposing the fictions of stability, unity and duration which allow the human animal to survive in the flux of becoming; as “the first instinct of spirituality” (TI, 9:2), it “ceaselessly strives for appearance and the superficial” (BGE, 229). However, as Nietzsche tells us,

this will to appearance, to simplification, to the mask, to the cloak, in short to the superficial – for every surface is a cloak – is *counteracted* by that sublime inclination in the man of knowledge which takes a profound, many-sided and thorough view of things and *will* take such a view: as a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste. (BGE, 230).

This, then, is the nature of the relationship which the Eleatics’ critics failed to question: self-preservation “wants most to hold us in this simplified, altogether artificial, fabricated, falsified world” (BGE, 24), while the will to truth strives to dissect, to understand, to destroy the very fictions which have allowed the human animal to survive; as Nietzsche writes, “in all desire to know there is already a drop of cruelty” (BGE, 229).

It is here, I will argue, that White loses his sense of rank ordering, in that he does not grasp the significance of this “failure” on the part of the Eleatics’ critics. To make this clear, I will briefly revisit the steps of his argument. The first stage, as we have seen, is the unchallenged dominance over human cognition of the fictions proper to the instinct of self-preservation. The second stage is the unsuccessful challenging of these fictions by the will to truth, the youngest and therefore the weakest of the human animal’s drives. White’s third stage, however, is characterized as the “coexistence” (68) of these two wills. In itself, this characterization is not inaccurate, but it would be more precise to say that, at this stage, the instinct of self-preservation subordinates the will to truth toward its own ends, that is, subsumes the will to truth under its

own perspective. These drives ‘coexist’ in the same way that a master and his servant can be said to coexist within the same household, but there is no equality of authority between them. The “failure” of the critics to interrogate this relationship demonstrates that the will to truth had, by this point, already accepted the authority of the drive to preservation: the condition of the will to truth’s continued existence was that it *not* question the value of truth for life, that it not begin a line of inquiry which would reveal that truth is hostile to life, but pursue only those truths which are compatible with the basic errors. In other words, the drive to self-preservation masked the essential cruelty of the will to truth behind the fictitious equation of truth with goodness, while simultaneously repressing truth’s natural, self-reflexive tendency. For this reason, “the critics concluded that the Eleatics were wrong to have rejected the notion that distinct beings can be identical” (White, 69), reinstating and underscoring the authority of the fictions proper to the instinct of self-preservation, which thus “became the norms according to which ‘true’ and ‘untrue’ were determined – down to the most remote regions of logic” (GS, 110).

Nietzsche recognized the nature of this relationship as early as the writing of TL in 1873. The context of that discussion is man’s relationship to truth and deception, and he claims that just as man is not opposed to deception as such but only to the harmful consequences of certain deceptions, “in a similarly limited way man wants the truth: he desires the agreeable life-preserving consequences of truth, but he is indifferent to pure knowledge, which has no consequences; he is even hostile to possibly damaging and destructive truths” (1). Later in that same essay, Nietzsche writes that only “so long as it is able to deceive without injuring, that master of deception, the intellect, is free; it is released from its former slavery and celebrates its Saturnalia” (2). This applies as well to truths as to deceptions, in the sense that the will to truth is only free in matters where it does not pose a threat to self-preservation. For this reason, as White

tells us, “following its defeat of the Eleatic position, the subtler *Redlichkeit* and skepticism continued to be moved by both wills, and develop[ed] along two lines, one serious and one playful” (69). The ‘serious’ activity of *Redlichkeit* “came into being wherever two contradictory sentences appeared to be *applicable* to life because *both* were compatible with the basic errors, and it was therefore possible to argue about the higher or lower degree of *utility* for life,” while the ‘playful’ activity arose “wherever new propositions, though not useful for life, were also evidently not harmful to life” (GS, 110).

The serious activity, for example, might concern itself with whether the principle of “the happiness of the greatest number” is more or less useful for human well-being than the Categorical Imperative: while utilitarianism and deontology contradict one another, neither contradicts the perspective of self-preservation, and so this drive can allow the relative benefits and drawbacks of each position to be weighed without risk to itself. As Nietzsche writes concerning “the teachers of the purpose of existence”:

Whether I contemplate men with benevolence or an evil eye, I always find them concerned with a single task: to do what is good for the preservation of the human race. Not from any feeling of love for the race, but merely because nothing in them is older, stronger, more inexorable and unconquerable than this instinct. (GS, 1).

When it comes to the most serious questions of the purpose of human existence, self-preservation has loaded the dice, as it were; by identifying itself with ‘Truth’ it has ensured that it will win every argument, because every argument throughout the history of philosophy has been an argument over different interpretations of this drive. Self-preservation has been the answer to every question precisely because it has not allowed one to ask questions that it cannot answer. The playful activity, to use White’s example, might concern itself with determining whether “all stones... fall to earth... because that is their natural abode, or because they are

pulled there by the force of gravity” (69). On this point, self-preservation has no need to assert its authority either way; as White goes on to say:

Our belief in the irrelevance, for life, of the conflict between Aristotelian and Newtonian physics may not prevent us from pursuing and developing that conflict with an eye to declaring a victor. Our belief in this irrelevance may even allow us the freedom to pursue precise accuracy, undeterred by the demands of successful acquaintance. This playful exercising of subtlety could develop, then, not with the goal of survival, but instead with the goal of truth. (69)

I will argue that these two lines of development are manifested in history as the distinction between metaphysics on the one hand, and the natural sciences (‘physics,’ broadly speaking) on the other. Metaphysics, as the ‘serious’ activity of *Redlichkeit*, has always taken its direction from the moral judgment ‘the true is the good,’ and has thus remained bound to questions of utility over and above truth, while the ‘playful’ *Redlichkeit* of the sciences has been limited by the instinct of self-preservation to inessential or neutral truths.

Nietzsche tells us that “gradually,” as a result of these two employments of *Redlichkeit* and skepticism, “the intellectual fight [about ‘truths’] became an occupation, an attraction, a profession, a duty, something dignified – and eventually knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] and the striving for the true found their place as a need among other needs” (GS, 110). On this point, White tells us that

crucial here is not so much the development of new needs as the internal instability of those needs. We have *two* forces: On the one hand, the apparently objective or disinterested demand for truth as precise accuracy, and on the other, the practical and indeed vital need for acquaintance that is successful, even if inaccurate in that it masks demonstrable differences. But the two forces can come to appear as a *single* force. As based on a single force, the object of the new need could appropriate the single name *Erkenntnis*, now understood *neither* simply as successful acquaintance, *nor* simply as unmasking of differences, but instead, I suggest, as necessarily beneficial accuracy. (70)

Again, the qualification “necessarily beneficial” reveals self-preservation’s dominance over human cognition. In this light, White’s fourth stage, the “coalescence of the two wills” (70), is redundant: as I have shown, their coalescence is the condition of their coexistence. White, however, goes on to ask how these two essentially contradictory drives could “coalesce into a single need” (70). His answer to this question seems to indicate some confusion over cause and effect. As he writes, these forces can coalesce “only... if the two can be guaranteed in advance to coincide. Such a guarantee is available only within a universe governed by a providential good or God. Thus, science can have developed as it has... only under the aegis of Platonism, or of Platonism for the people” (70). Again, White is not entirely inaccurate here; it is the case, for Nietzsche, that science as we know it is an inheritance of the Christian-Platonic mode of interpretation. However, this very interpretation is the *consequence* of these wills’ coalescence, and thus cannot serve as an advance guarantee enabling them to come together in the first place. That is, these wills are interpreted as a single need after the fact precisely because they are jointly responsible for interpreting for themselves a universe wherein truth is guaranteed by good/God to be beneficial. When the will to truth is subservient to self-preservation, the ‘truth’ thus articulated will necessarily take the form of a monism (the good, God, Being, etc.), because radical monism is precisely preservation’s fable of duration, unity and stability pushed to its widest limit. The fact that this interpretation has reigned, in one form or another, for 2500 years demonstrates the reason behind preservation’s coercion of the will to truth; via this bid for power, preservation gained the means of “present[ing] *itself* as the ultimate goal of existence and as the legitimate *master* of all the other drives” (BGE, 6), and by suppressing truth’s self-reflexivity it was able to sustain this interpretation for millennia.

This arrangement, at least in the early stages of coalescence, was mutually beneficial: by speaking from the perspective of self-preservation, the newborn will to truth enjoyed the protection, as it were, of this powerful drive, like a weak but intelligent child who gains the protection of the class bully in exchange for doing his homework. This set up the initial conditions for the power struggle which is still being played out between these two drives. By allowing the will to truth to discharge itself ‘playfully’ – that is, in the natural sciences – the drive to self-preservation was able to both satisfy this drive’s need for self-reflexivity (in a limited manner) and keep it weak enough to be controlled. In this light, the playful activity is akin to a pressure-release valve; it is a strategic move on the part of self-preservation, designed to prevent a damming-up of strength sufficient to allow the will to truth to break free of preservation’s authority. This was necessary because, when it came to the ‘serious’ matters of metaphysics, the will to truth faced the unrelenting pressure of being limited to a precisely defined range of pre-authorized interpretations, while being strictly barred from its natural self-reflexivity. In other words, the will to truth faced more or less constant resistance to its perspective, which in Nietzsche’s universe is the recipe for growth in power. White suggests that this growth came about when “the twin developments of our subtler *Redlichkeit*... developed strength through use” (70); this, however, betrays inadequate sensitivity to the dynamics of will to power, as it is precisely due to the continuous pressure of its subordination that “the striving for the true” was able to take its place as “a need among other needs” (GS, 110). To rephrase White’s point, the increasing use of this drive – its increasing need to discharge itself – was consequent on its ever-increasing strength, and not vice versa.

To return to a point I touched on above, the reason that “science can have developed as it has... only under the aegis of Platonism, or of Platonism for the people” (White, 70) is precisely

because the natural sciences have been the recipients of the excess strength accumulated by the will to truth's limitation in metaphysical matters. Because the will to truth as manifested in the sciences had the freedom to "provoke distrust and attempt to refute its own theories" (Moles, 33), it was able to advance step by step up to the present day, refining and perfecting its methods over centuries. Metaphysics, on the other hand, though pursued with as much enthusiasm as the sciences (if not more), "always trace[d] once more the identical orbit" (BGE, 20) without any decisive advances. That this state of affairs was apparent to past metaphysicians is evidenced by such thinkers as, for example, Descartes and Kant: both of these thinkers lament the fact that metaphysics lacks the firm foundation enjoyed by the sciences, and attempt to correct this oversight by furnishing this ground themselves. Here again, however, the will to truth was barred from interrogating its own foundation; in Nietzsche's words:

Strange though it may sound, in all 'science of morals' hitherto the problem of morality itself has been *lacking*: the suspicion was lacking that there was anything problematic here. What philosophers called 'the rational ground of morality' and sought to furnish was, viewed in the proper light, only a scholarly form of *faith* in the prevailing morality, a new way of *expressing* it, and thus itself a fact within a certain morality, indeed even in the last resort a kind of denial that this morality *ought* to be conceived of as a problem – and in any event the opposite of a testing, analysis, doubting and vivisection of this faith. (BGE, 186)

It is in this way that past philosophers have been insufficiently *redlich* "while making a mighty and virtuous noise as soon as the problem of truthfulness is even remotely touched on" (BGE, 5): instead of positing the central problems of metaphysics as hypotheses to be tested, denied, doubted, and proven (or disproven) by experiment, as per the scientific method, every attempt to critically analyze these problems has succeeded only in retrenching the authority of the instinct of self-preservation; what counts as true has always been treated as given. Thus Descartes required his proofs for the existence of God in order to establish that human cognition is not

predisposed to error,²⁷ while Kant's critique of pure reason led him back to 'God, freedom, and immortality'²⁸ – granted, as hypothetical postulates rather than facts within experience, though these, because unfalsifiable, are also 'unscientific.'

The decisive step in the development of *Redlichkeit* occurred when the will to truth became strong enough to challenge the authority of the instinct of self-preservation. White characterizes this stage as the "divergence of the two wills"; I will argue, however, that this challenge initially achieved only a partial divergence. Over time, the instinct of self-preservation gradually lost the upper hand in its struggle against the will to truth. This struggle was twofold. On the one hand, the interpretive power of self-preservation was exhausted after two millennia of variations on the same theme, while on the other, this drive had to expend more and more energy repressing truth's ever more strenuous insistence on self-reflexivity. The modern turn to secular morality can thus be seen as a kind of compromise between these drives: preservation conceded defeat over the theistic interpretation of the universe, and reasserted its authority on the basis of reason rather than God. However, with the loss of this interpretation, self-preservation lost its most powerful weapon in the struggle to repress truth's self-reflexivity. As Zarathustra says, "the poetizers and God-cravers... always look backward toward dark ages... [when] the rage of reason was godlikeness, and doubt was sin" (1:3). When doubt is no longer sin – when the theistic interpretation has perished, and with it all threat of otherworldly retribution – it is a short step from doubting the existence of God to doubting the authority of the moral interpretation as such. In Nietzsche's words, morality "possesses truth only if God is truth – it stands or falls with

²⁷ As one example of many references to God in relation to human error in the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes writes: "I must inquire whether there is a God, as soon as the opportunity presents itself; and if I find that there is one, I must also inquire whether he can be deceitful; for without the knowledge of these two truths, I do not see that I can ever be certain of anything" (*Third Meditation*, p.115).

²⁸ Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Pref. B, xxiv.-xxxii.

the belief in God” (TI, 9:5). Thus it is in the latter aspect of its twofold struggle that self-preservation ultimately failed: as Nietzsche writes, “eventually knowledge collided with those primeval basic errors” (GS, 110), that is, the will to truth finally gained sufficient freedom to interrogate – and undermine – the fictions proper to the instinct of self-preservation.

This, of course, led to nihilism, which is “the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of two-thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself *the lie involved in belief in God*” (GM, 3:27). White takes this to indicate that, at this stage, “the will to truth defeats the will to life” (71); I will argue, however, that White has misunderstood the significance of the nihilistic mode of interpretation. Seen in the proper light, the will to truth triumphs here only in a limited sense; as I argued above, self-preservation ultimately failed to keep the will to truth from taking its self-reflexive course and demolishing the authority of preservation’s former interpretations, but the advent of nihilism, rather than signifying preservation’s defeat, indicates that this drive has retained its status as the sole arbiter of truth. That is, nihilism is itself a fiction created and sustained by the (decadent) drive to self-preservation; it consists in the belief that to do away with the ‘truths’ proper to self-preservation is to do away with truth as such. Nihilism thus appears as preservation’s eleventh-hour attempt to triumph over the will to truth once and for all, by discrediting the very notion of truth. At this late stage of development, the decadence of this drive is such that it would prefer to lead humanity into the ultimate stasis of death rather than relinquish its claim to ‘Truth.’ White’s fifth stage, then, which he characterized as the “divergence of the two wills” wherein “the will to truth defeats the will to life” (71) must, properly understood, be seen as the partial divergence of these wills, with the potential triumph of the will to life (instinct of self-preservation) manifesting as humanity’s descent into nihilism.

Thus it is in the fifth and sixth stages of his genealogy that White's failure to differentiate between the will to preserve life and the will to enhance life becomes highly problematic. As I have shown, throughout his first five stages he has used 'will to life' in the sense of self-preservation; in his sixth stage, however, he argues that the emergence of *Redlichkeit* augurs the "potential triumph of the will to life" (72). If we take this usage of 'will to life' to indicate the drive to self-preservation, then we should expect Nietzsche's advocacy of *Redlichkeit* to amount to a call for the reinstatement of preservation's fictions of God, Being, and the goodness of truth – which, given Nietzsche's project, is a laughable proposition. If, however, we (rightly) take 'will to life' in this section to mean 'will to enhancement,' then White has fallen into the fallacy of using the same term in two different senses. The title of his sixth and final stage, then, should be properly rendered 'emergence of the youngest virtue; potential triumph of the will to truth toward the end of the enhancement of human life.'

Given the genealogical reconstruction pursued thus far, it is clear that in order for *Redlichkeit* to come into its own, the will to truth must complete its divergence from the instinct of self-preservation. That is, it must finally raise that most dangerous question, the question that Nietzsche himself was the first to hazard (BGE, 1): it must ask after the value of the will to truth itself, thus completing its self-reflexive turn. It must not only acknowledge but affirm its own essential cruelty, its tendency to work counter to the life-preserving fictions of Spirit, because it is precisely the fiction of stability which suppresses the human animal's creativity. This will necessarily entail a revaluation of the meaning of 'truth' itself; post-Nietzsche, what counts as true is only that which can be experienced, or as Zarathustra puts it, "this is what the will to truth should mean to you: that everything be changed into what is thinkable for man, visible for man, feelable by man" (2:2). By affirming – not merely suffering – the death of God (the negation of

the monistic principle), the door is opened for the truths of other drives to make themselves known; with the end of preservation's authority, the 'serious' questions of human existence must begin to participate in the kind of 'playful' conflict which has characterized the natural sciences.

Alistair Moles, though allowing the translation of *Redlichekeit* as 'honesty' to stand uninterrogated, tells us that

the strategy and attitudes of honesty, such as circumspection and slowness in coming to conclusions, are rare in comparison with the delight people take in jumping to conclusions and embracing new theories with enthusiasm. Distractions from honesty are commonplace; maintaining this virtue takes constant self-vigilance and constant hard discipline. Nietzsche claims that, of all types of knowledge, science reveals the greatest amount of honesty, since its method is to provoke distrust and attempt to refute its own theories, rather than to convince others and itself that these theories are true. (33)

In this light, *Redlichkeit* must be seen as consisting primarily in this conflict itself, that is, in the pursuit and development of the conflict between truths posited by different drives. These truths are themselves framed as hypotheses to be tested, doubted, and interrogated with an eye to determining their relative efficacy in enhancing human life;²⁹ this is the driving impulse behind Nietzsche's advocacy of an experimental method for philosophy. Because it can no longer be seen as desirable that one drive should be allowed to 'philosophize' at the expense of all others (as Life tells Zarathustra, "all truths that are kept silent become poisonous" (2:12)), this method must incorporate and affirm the necessity of maintaining the will to truth's natural self-reflexivity; it must "forsake... final solutions and ultimate conclusions... [and] remain... cognizant of the perpetual possibility of seeing differently and of naming differently" (White, 75). Thus *Redlichkeit* can be seen, in some sense, as the reverse of the state of affairs which persisted in metaphysics for more than two thousand years: while previously serious *Redlichkeit*

²⁹ Cf., for example, Nietzsche's presentation, in strictly hypothetical language, of will to power as the fundamental phenomenon (BGE, 36).

was bound to the condition of speaking only from the perspective of the instinct of self-preservation and suppressing all attempts at self-reflexivity, the only condition binding Nietzschean *Redlichkeit* is that it no longer speak from this perspective (it having proven itself detrimental to human enhancement), while willing the perpetual self-overcoming of all articulated truths. The conflict, in other words, can no longer take the form of a fight between different interpretations of a single drive, but must become a battle between all drives (and all potential combinations and hierarchies of drives) for spiritual supremacy. Because these potential combinations are, to all intents and purposes, infinite in number, *Redlichkeit* appears as “the opening of the horizons of a host of fascinating ways of thinking and of living” (White, 76).

If this interpretation of *Redlichkeit* as the conflict between truths holds, we must see Nietzsche’s philosophy as an attempt to reinstate the kind of philosophical *agon* that Nietzsche identified as being characteristic of the pre-Platonic philosophers. The key difference between Nietzsche and his ancient predecessors is that while most of the pre-Platonics attempted to interpret the universe according to a single underlying principle (water or fire, *nous* or number, etc.),³⁰ Nietzsche’s project interprets the universe according to process rather than state. That is, his interpretation of the universe as will to power is an articulation of a particular *pattern* of ascent and descent that manifests itself in all processes and at all scales. It is the case, as Wilhelm S. Wurzer points out, that “the properties of life such as becoming, plurality, contradiction, and change do not lend themselves to firmly established theories” (239), but it is possible that life as a process in becoming displays universality in the sense of self-similarity across scale – that is, of similar patterns replicating themselves upward from the local to the global levels of interpretation, from the basic dynamics of inorganic or elemental forces upward to the most

³⁰ Heraclitus represents the most obvious exception to this rule.

complex achievements of human culture. Nietzsche's new philosophical *agon*, then, is a contest over how best to interpret this overall pattern; he has thrown down the gauntlet with his interpretation of life as will to power, and challenged us to come up with a better explanation if we can.

The reason, moreover, that Nietzsche's philosophy necessarily aims to institute a new *agon* is because 'contest' is precisely the universal dynamic of a world whose essence is will to power. Because speaking or talking – *reden* – itself represents one scale or level of interpretation within the whole, *what* we say and *how* we say it must display the same fundamental tendency as the whole. White makes an interesting point in his discussion of the etymology of *Redlichkeit* which deserves further consideration here; as he writes:

One who has good luck [*Glück*] is thereby made lucky or happy [*glücklich*], and one who is blessed [*selig*] with sufficient luck and thus happiness [*Glücklichkeit*] attains blissfulness [*Glückseligkeit*]. In sharp contrast, simply being able to talk [*reden*] does not make one "honest" [*redlich*], and one who is blessed [*selig*] in terms of speaking acquires or exhibits not the perfection of "honesty" [*Redlichkeit*] but the defect of garrulousness or loquacity [*Redseligkeit*] – the gift of gab. If we consider solely its etymology, then, it is not obvious that "*Redlichkeit*" would name a virtue at all, but we might reasonably conclude that if it did, it would name the virtue of one who speaks well or appropriately – the virtue, perhaps, of the rhetorician, who is adept at fitting speech to audience and occasion. (64)

White offers this point as part of his justification for why 'honesty' is an inadequate translation of *Redlichkeit*, in the sense that "'honest' people, we might think, are those who do *not* fit their speeches to specific audiences and occasions, but who, instead, simply tell the truth" (*ibid.*). I will argue, however, that *Redlichkeit* in Nietzsche's sense is, in fact, the virtue of "one who speaks... appropriately" – not simply by adapting his speech to "audience and occasion" (though this is itself important, as Zarathustra's first, disastrous speeches to 'the people' demonstrated to his initial dismay (Prologue, 3-5)), but by adapting the mode of his speech to the phenomena that

this very speech is attempting to articulate. More clearly, because Nietzsche has interpreted the universal ‘pattern across scale’ as will to power, he has articulated his philosophy in a manner consistent with will to power, thus rendering his ‘speech’ itself consistent with the overall pattern. *Redlichkeit* is our single most important virtue because through constant self-reflexive discipline we strive to ensure that what we say is consistent with what we are; because ‘what we are’ is constantly in a state of becoming, what we say must itself remain open to being unsettled, reevaluated, tested, doubted, and eventually undermined. Thus *Redlichkeit* represents the continuing dissolution of the metaphysical antitheses ‘body and mind,’ ‘man and nature,’ ‘theory and practice’; it erases the traditional divide between the ‘truth’ we articulate and the life we live. This is why, for Zarathustra, the healthy body speaks *am redlichsten*: unlike the sick body, which interprets the war of its instincts as evil and masks them behind the fictions of God, freedom, and the immortal soul, the great health recognizes and affirms the essential ‘devilry’ of its nature; it interprets itself as a reproduction, in miniature, of the fundamental tendency of a world whose essence is will to power, and speaks unashamedly of itself as “the meaning of the earth” (Z, 1:3).

Conclusion: Nietzsche’s Children

In a speech entitled “On Old and New Tablets,” Zarathustra speaks to his brothers of the future, and inscribes the following on one of his new tablets:

O my brothers, I dedicate and direct you to a new nobility: you shall become procreators and cultivators and sowers of the future.... Not whence you come shall henceforth become your honor, but whither you are going! ...O my brothers, your nobility should not look backward but ahead! Exiles shall you be from all father- and forefather-lands! Your *children’s land* shall you love: this love shall be your new nobility – the undiscovered land in the most distant sea. For that I bid your sails search and search. In your children you shall make up for being the children of your fathers: thus shall you redeem all that is past. This new tablet I place over you. (3:12, §12)

Throughout my analysis, I have made much of the fact that the scholar is the servant of the philosopher, and have attempted to articulate the way in which this service is carried out. In doing so, however, I have focused primarily on the scholar's service to the past, to values which have been legislated before his time, and have neglected the aspect of this task which is directed at the future. Because the creation and legislation of new values lies outside even the highest-ranking scholar's capabilities, it could seem that the past, and not the future, is the scholar's proper domain. This interpretation gains support from Nietzsche's own comments in BGE: as he writes,

It is the duty of... scholars to take everything that has hitherto happened and been valued, and make it clear, distinct, intelligible and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even 'time' itself, and to *subdue* the entire past: a tremendous and wonderful task in the service of which every subtle pride, every tenacious will can certainly find satisfaction. (211)

This is in line with what I have said about the free spirit's task: in imposing Nietzsche's values upon himself and the scholarship of his time, he is, at bottom, reducing his past and present to formulas, and preparing the way for those to come. It is here that his duty to the future lies, in that the free spirit serves as a barometer of the spiritual health of his age, and it is for this reason that he requires a clear understanding of the physiological dynamics of will to power as manifest in the dominant values of his time.

Nietzsche did not suffer from the illusion that his spiritual revolution could be accomplished overnight; he knew firsthand what it means to possess "a protracted terrible will... which could set its objectives thousands of years ahead" (BGE, 208). Within his own work, Nietzsche has provided his readers with a diagnosis of Western culture from the tragic age of the Greeks to the late stages of the nineteenth century, a task to which he sacrificed his life, his

health, and eventually his sanity, so that future generations could have a chance at life free of the spiritual vampirism of herd ideals. His effort have revealed the pattern of evolution of these ideals over two thousand years, and given us the means of recognizing the symptoms both of decline and of health for ourselves. In taking up his critical apparatus and applying it to our own age, those of us in his service continue his work by revealing the further evolution of the human spirit since Nietzsche's time, and offer up our diagnoses for the benefit of future philosophers. By reducing the spirit of our age to formulas, we save the philosophers of the future the kind of effort required to make these diagnoses themselves, and free their hands for their own proper task. As Nietzsche sacrificed himself to us, so we sacrifice ourselves to them, in the hope that the children of our spirit will take for granted their right to the values for which we fought with every breath.

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Annotated Bibliography

Blondel, Eric. *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture*. Trans. Seán Hand. London: The Athlone Press, 1992.

In the ninth chapter of this book, entitled “The Body and Metaphor,” Blondel discusses the question of language and its ‘built-in metaphysics,’ arguing that a consideration of Nietzsche’s style can help to understand this problematic connection. By contrast with both idealism, which does away with the body, and mechanics or biologism, which objectivize the body, Blondel argues that Nietzsche’s commitment to *Versuch* or experiment led him to attempt the formulation of a new language which, “instead of simplifying, [tries] to regain a multiplicity of perspectives on life” (203). The genealogical method, accordingly, emphasizes the connection to physiology by viewing the body as the origin of values, while avoiding a purely mechanistic or empirical interpretation in by adopting this new, metaphorical language in order to “represent the world of drives” (204). The result is a conception of the body as an *intermediary* between an outer world and an inner consciousness, and a revaluation of the intellect as an instrument of the body (rather than as its governing agent). In this way, the body comes to be seen as “*the* principal agency in which the chaos of the world is first reduced by each drive and then pluralized once again” (214). For Blondel, the reason that the body is essentially unknowable for Nietzsche is not because it exists as a singular, though obscured, foundation, but because it represents a plurality or multiplicity that cannot be grasped by the intellect, which strives for simplicity and singularity; in this sense, he argues that Nietzsche does not intend “to reduce the intellect to the body, but, in presenting the *body* as a ‘plurality of intellects,’ to reveal the radical nature of *plurality*” (207).

Brown, Richard S.G. “Nihilism: ‘Thus Speaks Physiology.’” In *Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism: Essays on Interpretation, Language, and Politics*. Ed. Tom Darby, Béla Egyed, and Ben Jones. Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1989. 133-44.

This essay looks at the relationship between an individual’s underlying physiology and its consciously-held values within Nietzsche’s thought in general, and between physiology and nihilism in particular. Brown identifies two formulations of the physiological principle operative within Nietzsche’s work, the first of which moves from a particular value down to its underlying physiology, and the second of which moves from a set of physiological conditions upward to the values that the physiologist/philosopher should expect to see as a result of these conditions. In doing so, Brown locates the cause of nihilism in the Christian-moral interpretation, and contrasts this with the mode of evaluation present within Buddhism. This essay also discusses the distinction in Nietzsche’s work between descending and ascending human life, and outlines the difference between negation as a result of physiological decline (the negation of life and value), and negation as a prerequisite for the affirmation of life on the other (the negation of values and judgments which arise out of physiological decline).

Emden, Christian J. *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body*. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2005.

This monograph aims to situate Nietzsche's reflections on language, consciousness, and the body within the wider historical context of nineteenth-century discourses on "the theory of knowledge, philological scholarship, contemporary physiology, and the life sciences at large" (2). Rather than simply looking at Nietzsche's relationship to these scientific discussions in terms of a simplistic 'cause and effect' schema, Emden's text emphasizes the interactions between disciplines (in a manner reminiscent of Foucauldian analysis) in order to show that "Nietzsche's position within intellectual history occupies a specific site of intersecting discursive fields" (6) which initially occupied the margins, rather than the mainstream, of nineteenth-century scientific thought. Chapter Three, entitled "What Is a Trope? The Discourse of Metaphor and the Language of the Body," briefly discusses the relationship of Nietzsche's views on language and thought to physiological debates that were current in his time, while Chapter Four ("The Nervous System of Modern Consciousness: Metaphor, Physiology, and the Self") involves a detailed look at Nietzsche's conception of metaphor, and the way in which he attempted to integrate this concept with a wide range of contemporary scientific discourses. Among other topics, this chapter looks at the physiological origins of metaphor as formulated in "Description of Ancient Rhetoric" and "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense."

Janaway, Christopher. *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*. New York: Oxford UP, 2007.

Janaway's reading of *On the Genealogy of Morals* can be distinguished from other works on this text by the author's commitment to the elucidation of this text, not only in terms of what it says, but also in terms of the effect that it has on the reader. That is, Janaway views the individual reader's reaction to Nietzsche's bombastic rhetoric as an essential strategy in his attempt to reevaluate all values, in that, by addressing the reader's "affects, feelings, or emotions" (4) directly, Nietzsche provokes the reader to face his own deep-seated values in a manner than goes far deeper than a superficial and merely intellectual engagement with an 'inert' text. This allows the reader to confront the issues addressed by Nietzsche in a deeply personal manner which is consistent with the notion of genealogy as the history of *one's own* values. This is also consistent with Nietzsche's understanding of the body as a "composite of drives and affective states" (4), a discussion of which forms an important part of Janaway's analysis. Chapter Nine, entitled "Will to Power in the *Genealogy*," discusses the physiological basis of will to power, while Chapter Twelve, "Perspectival Knowing and the Affects," deals with Nietzsche's understanding of the affects in terms of their role in interpretation and the formation of knowledge, and addresses some problems that arise out of this understanding.

Moore, Gregory. *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2002.

In this book, Moore attempts to situate Nietzsche's biological metaphors against the background of late nineteenth-century discussions of evolution and degeneration. Against the prevailing conception of Nietzsche as representing a dramatic break with history and his own age, Moore argues that Nietzsche's biologism is highly consistent with the dominant discourses of his time, and that this aspect of his thought is far more 'timely' than many current readers recognize. Without reducing Nietzsche to the status of "one biologist among others" (6), Moore tries to show how Nietzsche problematized and reevaluated Darwinian discourse while remaining,

to some extent, “ensnared in his century’s values and prejudices” (10). The first chapter of this work looks at Nietzsche’s apparent ‘anti-Darwinism’ as being consistent with a larger intellectual movement which adopted aspects of Darwin’s thought and used them in an essentially anti-Darwinian manner, and argues that Nietzsche’s formulation of will to power represents “one such alternative evolutionary mechanism” (16). The second and third chapters deal with Nietzsche’s ethical and aesthetic claims respectively as representing similar ‘evolutionary alternatives’ to those being proposed in contemporary discourse, the difference being that Nietzsche recognized that other interpretations remained bound to the Christian-moral mode of interpretation (albeit in secular, rather than overtly religious, terms). Chapter four deals with the evolution of the concept of decadence throughout Nietzsche’s corpus, while chapter five deals with the way in which Nietzsche takes up the nineteenth-century preoccupation with decadence and turns it against Christian morality. The final chapter looks at Nietzsche’s critique of art “in the context of contemporary notions of artistic ‘health’ and ‘sickness’” (17).

Richardson, John. *Nietzsche’s New Darwinism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2004.

This text argues, against the prevailing conception of Nietzsche as essentially anti-Darwinian, that Nietzsche both agrees and disagrees with Darwinism in several important respects. Despite the fact that the majority of Nietzsche’s published comments on Darwin are derogatory, Richardson demonstrates that these comments serve to obscure the very real intellectual affinities that exist between Nietzsche’s and Darwin’s thought, in that Nietzsche accepts the central concept of Darwinian evolution, namely natural selection, whereas his negative comments are indicative of his attempt to use this concept towards his own ends. Richardson also argues that Nietzsche ascribed to a notion of social selection alongside that of natural selection. This analysis discusses Nietzsche’s relationship to Darwinism in terms of four registers of Nietzsche’s thought. The first is that of biology, which section deals with both the will to power and the drives. The second register is that of metaethics, which attempts to grasp how Nietzsche can claim that his values are uniquely his own while simultaneously positing that these values are superior to other evaluations. The third section deals with Nietzsche’s ethics/politics, in other words with Nietzsche’s individual values themselves, and complicates any straightforward understanding of Nietzsche as a ‘social Darwinist.’ The fourth and final register is that of aesthetics, specifically the way in which Nietzsche “means his values ‘aesthetically’” (6), that is, as arising out of the imagination rather than according to rational judgment.